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Olympic

Games 2000

Unemployed

and on a mission

The

Amazon Super Challenge

Sea

kayaking at 80° North

4 pages of jobs

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE BCU

ICE Show Guide
Pull-out inside

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Hurricane

Cyclone

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BCU DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Canoe Focus

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More People
canoeing with
the BCU

More Activity
promoting more
canoeing activity

More Access
more access to
waterways, facilities
and finance

More Coaching
improving the
quality and
quantity of coaching

More Medals
winning more
international, world
and olympic medals

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Your contributions make Focus happen. The quality and variety of news, articles, reports and photographs depend on the submission of material from you. Very few contributors are professional writers and photographers. Please don't be put off writing because you have no experience! Canoe Focus is all about canoeist to canoeist dialogue: a paddler's magazine written by paddlers. **Technical Information.** Contributions are acceptable in clear handwriting or typed (double spaced). PC disks (3.5 or 5.25) can be read from most Word Processing programmes especially if saved as an ASCII file. Macintosh Files saved as DOS or ASCII can also be scanned. Photographic images are preferred on transparencies (colour slide). Artwork and line drawings should be clear and large. All material is accepted on the understanding that the BCU and it's agents cannot be held liable or responsible for loss or damage, although every care and effort is taken to safeguard material. Next Copy date is the 20th FEBRUARY 2000. Material arriving at FOCUS after this date cannot be included in the APRIL 2000 issue. Canoe Focus encourages contributions of any nature but reserves the right to edit and condense to fill the space available and unless otherwise stated the Publishers assume no responsibility for the return of unsolicited manuscripts, artwork or photographs. Opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the British Canoe Union, its committees or members. The printing of an advertisement in Canoe Focus does not necessarily mean that the British Canoe Union endorse the company, item or service advertised. All material in Canoe Focus is strictly copyright and all rights are reserved. Reproduction without prior permission from the Editor is forbidden.





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13 Lower Northam Road, Hedge End, Southampton 01489 799555



**European Sea Kayaking
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Bank Holiday Weekend includes sessions on:

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| Alternative Strokes | GPS Skills |
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| Evening Meal | Towing |
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For Further Details re. Programme, Transport/Accommodation Packages

Contact Jeremy Michel: **Tel 01534 639390**

Kevin Mansell: **Tel 01534 45936 and e-mail kmansell@itl.net**

Chris Jones: **Tel 01534 734073 and e-mail cjj@super.net.uk**

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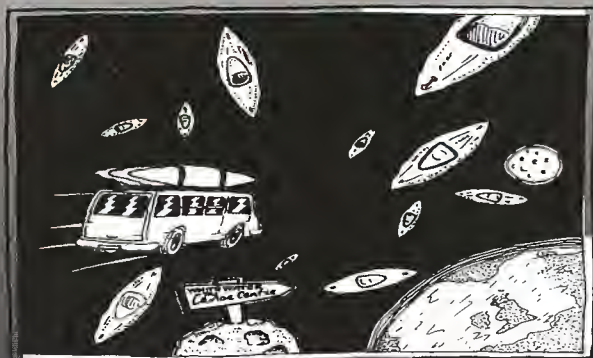
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COMMENT input & ideas

Princess Royal

As we closed for press we received news from the Palace! Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal has accepted our invitation to become Honorary Patron of the 2001 Marathon Canoe and Kayak Championships.

The event will be held in Stockton on Tees from Thursday 30th August to Sunday 2nd September.

BCU AGM - 11 March 2000

This year's BCU AGM will be held at the National Motorcycle Museum, Coventry Road, Bickenhill, Solihull, West Midlands (very close to the M42 and the NEC). Commencing at 2.30pm this year's meeting could well be historic as proposals to create an English Canoe Association will be considered.

If the proposals made by the BCU Board are accepted then the current BCU will change its name to the English Canoe Association and a new BCU will be formed with Directors drawn from The English Canoe Association, The Scottish Canoe Association, The Welsh Canoe Association and the Canoe Association of Northern Ireland.

UK Director of Coaching

It is with very great pleasure that I am able to announce that our new Director of Coaching (UK) is Mike Devlin. Mike joined the BCU as Coaching Development Officer and very quickly he had to plunge into the deep end with Geoff Good's illness.

I know that we all wish Mike well with the many challenges that lie ahead for him and our coaching service.

Governing Body of the Year

Congratulations to the BCU Northern Regional Development Team who became the regional governing body of the year.

Sports Council Revenue Funding

The BCU has just agreed the level of revenue grant from both UK Sport and Sport England as follows:

UK Sport	£225,000
Sport England	£200,000
A total of	£425,000

Awards

December was certainly the month for national honours for British Canoeists culminating in Ivan Lawler, the six times World Champion receiving the MBE in the New Year's Honours list.

At the National Coaching Foundation's Annual Awards ceremony MaryAnne Good received posthumously on behalf of Geoff a Dyson Award from HRH The Princess Royal.

The Geoffrey Dyson award is for individuals who have made a sustained and significant contribution to the development of coaching and individual coaches in the United Kingdom.

Also, in the New Year's Honours list Peter Mitchell our Canoe Polo Team Manager received the MBE for his services to Scouting. Knowing Peter's commitment to Canoeing it is hard to imagine how he can find enough time for his other work - a truly outstanding contributor to our sport.

International Canoe Exhibition

Don't miss the International Canoe Exhibition which will be held at the NEC later this month on February 26th & 27th.

I am pleased to announce that the event is once again a sell out with many attractions for the visitor including a new area put aside for talks and lectures.

For advance booking and preferential priced tickets, please contact the BCU Office.

North Sea Crossing

Congratulations, to Rod Cooke, Ian Castro and Simon Worsley for a successful North Sea crossing setting a new record of 24 hrs 20 minutes - a magnificent achievement.

DW and Sports Aid

Announced In December's Canoe Focus was the news that the Devizes Westminster Canoe Race will be supporting the Sports Aid Foundation this Easter. Further details are now available :-

No charitable organisation has invested more money in the sport of canoeing than SportsAid. Since its first grant to Canoeing in 1976 SportsAid has invested over £1.4 million in British Canoeing talent.

Until National Lottery money became available for the elite of our sport, it was SportsAid which helped the likes of Ivan Lawler, Richard Fox, Lynn Simpson, Steve Harris, Anna Hemmings and the Train brothers to become Champions of the World.

50% of the money raised from this year's DW will be ring fenced for making grants to young canoeists.

John Ernest Davidson Travers 1915 - 2000

It is with great sadness and regret that we have to record the death of John Ernest Davidson (Jack) Travers.

Jack served the BCU as the first Chair of Corps of Canoe LifeGuards (1965-1980), Coaching Committee (1964-1980) BCU Council (1964-1982). He was awarded the BCU Award of Merit in 1974 and even worked as the BCU Office Manager for a short spell.

Chief
Executive
Paul Owen



NOTICE BOARD

news & info

YOUTH PROGRAMME 4 NEW JOBS

The BCU is delighted to announce that a number of new job opportunities (see below) have arisen both within the Youth Programme and Coaching Department. If you are interested in receiving more information on the posts and Job specifications please contact:

Maria Winfield
Coaching Department
British Canoe Union
Adbolton Lane
West Bridgford
Nottingham
NG2 5 AS

Tel : 0115 9821100

Email:

coaching@bcu.org.uk

Or go to our website

www.bcu.org.uk

Geoff Good enters the Hall of Fame

On 9 December 1999 at the Café Royal, Regent Street, London the National Coaching Foundation (NCF) held it's Annual Awards Dinner.

In 1998 the NCF established its Hall of Fame to recognise outstanding achievement in and contribution to the development of coaching. Geoff Good the late Director of Coaching for the British Canoe Union was nominated for the Geoffrey Dyson Award.

The Geoffrey Dyson Award is for individuals who have made a sustained and significant contribution to the development of coaching and individual coaches in the United Kingdom. Geoffrey Dyson was a track and field coach, and coach educator whose influence extended well beyond athletics and this award is given in his name.



Geoff Good was nominated in light of his outstanding contribution to the work of the British Canoe Union. During a 19-year tenure as Director of Coaching for the British Canoe Union, he devised a system of coach education and support services envied at home and abroad.

Geoff more than tripled the number of qualified coaches and instructors. Increased safety awareness and the development of safer practices and equipment were a hallmark of his work and concern, but he was by no means conservative in his approach and was always ready to adopt ideas from elsewhere and apply them in an innovative manner. The BCU now has over 12,000 coaches in its system due to Geoff's vision, commitment and hard work. His untimely death means that he will not see the impact of the additional funding now available to the sport but he has left it all the better for his contribution.

Mary-Ann, Geoff's widow, and their two sons Andrew and Simon attended the prestigious Awards dinner and Mary-Ann was presented the Geoffrey Dyson Award by HRH The Princess Royal.



Symonds Yat Rapids

- Come and see us at the NEC next to Pyranha
- Find out the latest news on how the project is going
- Buy yourself a numbered print of the Rapids painted by Lisel Walker. Exhibition price £18.00



New Sales Director for KOGG



Cam Allan has joined KOGG as Sales Director. Cam is the latest addition to the expanding KOGG team and will enable the company to develop sales support and advice to all our customers. He has been sponsored by KOGG and

Pyranha for the past couple of years as a Creek Boater and technical coach. Cam's knowledge and expertise of paddling and rafting means that he will be able to answer your questions and give you up-to-date info about the kit and what's happening in the sport.

You will be able to meet Cam along with others from KOGG at the International Canoe Exhibition in Birmingham where KOGG will have a display stand. 1999 saw an increase in KOGG kit on the water and the Year 2000 has already seen an expansion of the KOGG premises and production team.

Contact: **Chris Simmonds Cam Allan. Tel: +44 (0)1738 622010** E-mail: info@kogg.co.uk Website: www.kogg.co.uk
12 Acorn Business Centre, Arran Road, Perth PH1 3DZ

The Symbol of Excellence

There's something magical about the ability of a Mad River Canoe to transform an ordinary outing into an adventure. And it really doesn't matter where you go, because when you're paddling a Mad River, the journey is every bit as rewarding as the destination. That's the Mad River Feeling and you won't get it in any other canoe. At Mad River Canoe, we build quality canoes of many designs for all levels of paddlers and all moods of water. But every Mad River Canoe is built with one simple notion in mind, the idea that paddling ought to be an adventure -- your kind of adventure.



Outrage

The Outrage is an ultra-responsive, 12 foot Royalex whitewater playboat. The design team of Jim Henry and Tom Foster created a boat with outstanding overall quickness, one that rolls easily and excels at upstream maneuvers. A versatile whitewater craft for paddlers weighing 200 lbs. or less, it delivers outrageous fun running steep creeks and Class III-IV rivers, surfing waves, and executing rodeo moves.



Freedom

The Royalex Freedom is a versatile tandem design offering outstanding river-running performance. Inspired by the Explorer, the Freedom has the generous cargo capacity necessary for whitewater trips along with more rocker for increased maneuverability and dryness important to river paddlers. The seats are also positioned closer to the centre than in the Explorer. This lively canoe is fun to paddle in whitewater, yet shows surprising speed in flat water.



R-Series Teton

Working from the V-hull design that made Mad River Canoe famous, designer Jim Henry crafted the new roto-molded Teton, which is well-suited to a wide range of applications, from placid lakes and moving water to fishing, family expeditions and canoe camping. With the company's trademark shallow V-hull, the tandem Teton is an affordable do-it-all boat that combines stability, tracking and performance. It is ideal for families and others on a budget who need one boat for many uses. Constructed from Roto-moulded linear polyethylene.



Intrigue

The affordable Intrigue is a short, performance-oriented tandem canoe with a Royalex Lightweight hull. Recreational canoeists will like its easy paddling, tracking, and glide characteristics on flat and smooth-flowing water. The Intrigue has ample capacity for weekend camping, and is highly maneuverable when exploring twisty blackwater rivers. Solo paddling is easy with the addition of a kneeling thwart or centre seat.



Guide

Flatwater cruising, wilderness tripping and whitewater play — they all demand different and seemingly incompatible performance characteristics, but Jim Henry has given the Royalex Guide the ability to do it all. It travels fast, and accommodates paddlers of all sizes. Paddlers will appreciate the nice balances of initial and secondary stability in this performance solo boat on whitewater rivers or large exposed lakes.



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NOTICEBOARD

Press launch of the 2001 Marathon World Championships

GB Marathon Team manager Jim Rossiter and BCU Chief Executive Paul Owen with marathon world champions Ivan Lawler and Anna Hemmings onboard the replica of Captain Cook's ship 'Endeavour', at

Stockton-on-Tees for the press launch of the 2001 Marathon World Championships.

Picture: David Enoch



Lottery Grant helps Heywood Scouts Keep Afloat

Below: For the past 15 years members of Heywood Distract Scouts in Greater Manchester have been introduced to Canoe Polo and enjoyed the chance to learn basic canoeing skills as part of their training programme.
Picture: Dave Saunders



Through the kind offices of the Borough Council, the manager and staff of the Gaskell Pool hundreds of Scouts have taken to the water at weekly training sessions in canoes purchased originally by the Groups and the District.

Time, however, had taken its toll and the existing boats, whilst not unsafe, after much use had reached the end of their serviceable life. The cost of replacing all ten craft would take a lot of finding, during which time the sessions may have had to be stopped. A grant of £4309 was awarded to the Scouts who will now be able to continue their canoeing uninterrupted.

Consultation between the Scout District and Scout County Activists personnel resulted in the successful application and a grant for the full cost of the boats, spray-decks, paddles, buoyancy-aids, helmets and face guards.

Millennium Festival Awards for All
Sheffield Canoe Club have been lucky enough to have been awarded a grant of £3900 under the Millennium Festival Awards for All, which is a lottery grant for local groups.

The money is for purchasing a storage container plus 5 kayaks and equipment. This will help in the ever increasing popularity in our weekly coaching sessions on the River Don at Oughtibridge. They run an active programme all year round for further details please contact In 0114 2464070 or Chris on 01302 719640

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WHAT'S ON news & info

OCSG Events 15/16th April.

Start the Season at Hollingworth, Lancashire. More information contact **Walter Green** on **01254 56116**



International Canoe Exhibition - Canoeing 2000

National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham
Sat/Sun 26th/27th February 2000

Saturday 10am – 7pm, Sunday 10am – 5.30pm
Adults £9 Children £5.50
Family £28 FREE PARKING
Telephone enquiries **0115 9821100**

for changing, showers and parking for a small charge. Hundreds paddle the Crake every year and these events greatly build upon the goodwill that we enjoy in the valley.

Distance – 10km from Brown Howe on Coniston Water to Greenodd Grade 2/3. Shuttle and refreshments arranged by local residents. Organisation by Duddon Canoe Club. Sponsor forms and more details from **Colin Liten, Duddon View, Marsh side, Kirkby-in-Furness, Cumbria. LA17 7UW. Tel: 01229 889629**

Tours and Open events at Canolfan Tryweryn

The Peak UK Whitewater Challenge 8th/9th April. This classic events returns to Canolfan Tryweryn for it's third year, Contact Peak UK to enter.

The Nookie Tour, 13th/14th May, will have a bonfire, band and free beer. Paddling from Graveyard to Bala from 10.00am each day.

The Whitewater Consultancy, Mad River/Wavesport Open, 27th/28th May will have half price tickets for all participants. Paddling from Graveyard to Tyn-Cornel.

The Palm/Dagger Tour, 22nd/23rd July will have coaching and a party. Paddling from Top-site to Bala each day.

The 5:10 Tour and 5th Annual Coaching Festival, 9th/10th September. Paddling from Top-site to Bala each day.

Canolfan Tryweryn anticipates a year of over 200 releases in addition to these events. The 24hour water information line is updated with release information and is available on 01678 520826.

6/7th May. Cruising with Ken at Loch Ken, Dumfries. Organiser to be arranged.

20/21st May. Spring Weekend at Coniston, Cumbria. Organisers **Kevin Leahy (01539 535979)** and **Dave Poskitt (01539 533878)**

10/11th June. Coastal Canoeing Training Workshop at Menai Straits, Gwynedd. For more information contact the organiser, **Keith Morris** on **01539 534638**

River Axe Canoe Race -

Sunday 12th March 2000

This popular race is an excellent introduction to canoe racing and also provides a challenging race to the more experienced paddler. All classes are open to paddlers with disabilities. The race starts 5 miles south of Axminster at Whitford Bridge M/R 263956. The separate classes and age categories allow for fair competitive racing and there are medals for all classes. Free refreshments are available to all competitors.

Race Details: Booking in: 9.30am – 10.30 at Whitford Bridge

Briefing: 10.30am **Race start:** 11am **Finish:** Axe Yacht club, Axmouth Harbour Seaton. For more information please contact **Axe Vale Canoe club 01460 72553**

Washburn Wild Water Racing - Millennium Dash & Classic Double Header

Saturday 18th March Sprint (2 runs)

Sunday 19th March Classic (1 run – full river)

This event is aimed to provide fun for the whole club, there are classes for plastic boats, WWR boats and wavehoppers, which will be available for hire on the day.

Please come along and support what will be a great event!

- Guaranteed water levels
- Start at 11am both days with full practice from water on 9am
- Camping and B&B available
- Special plastic Boat class
- River will then be open for cruising on both days from 2pm

Make it a day out for the whole club with guaranteed water and loads of fun. Further details from Ian Needham by e-mail at Ian.Needham@btinternet.com or by post 22 Prince Henry Road, Otley, West Yorkshire LS21 2BE. Before travelling please ring the **Washburn info line on 01426 978654**

Sponsored Paddle – River Crake Cumbria. 19th March 2000

After the big success of the paddle last year raising £1400 towards the cost of rebuilding the village hall at Greenodd. A similar event is to be organised in 2000. Money is still needed for the Greenodd Hall but this time half of the money raised will go for work on the Village Hall at Spark Bridge. UPDATE – This is now being opened

The 2000 'Open Challenge' White Water Raft Race 8th/9th April.

The winning ladies and men's teams will be put forward to races in the 2000 European Rafting Championships. Events to take place in autumn, 2000.

Teams must consist of six members (including guide). The guide must prove that he or she has guide status (such as Shipping Licence B, any WCA, SRA or BCU raft qualification) or has competed in rafting at an international level. If your team does not have a qualified guide you can enter a team of five and we will provide you with a helm.

Applications must be in before Friday 17th March 2000. The fee is £90 per team (£15 per head). The competitions will involve a raft slalom, downriver, endurance and kayak race. Further details on request. Please send SAE to: **C.Lovell, C/o BCU Headquarters, Adbolton Lane, west Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 5AS. Tel: 0115 9821100.**





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Aspire - Three Peaks Millennium Challenge – June 2nd, 3rd and 4th 2000

The spinal injury charity ASPIRE is calling for teams of climbers and walkers to undertake the exciting and ambitious Three Peaks Millennium Challenge. Teams of four will tackle the three highest mountains in England Scotland and Wales in just 24 hours over the weekend. It is hoped that the marathon event, which entails climbing Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon, will raise more than £50,000 for ASPIRE. For a registration fee of only £25 per person each team member will receive an ASPIRE T-shirt, car sticker and a cooked breakfast after they have climbed Snowdon. For further details contact

Lynsey Coles 0181 4206706

Doggy Paddle 2000 – Charity Canoeing event in aid of The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association -



Sunday 16th April.

This is a plea to regular participants and as many new paddlers as possible including youth groups, Guides, Scouts, Cadets etc to come along and help us reach our target of £10,000. Use the 19 miles as a time, or simply a leisurely paddle in a very picturesque part of the country. The run is from Leamington

Spa to Stratford-upon-Avon, 19 miles with 4 weirs, and the only opportunity to paddle this stretch of water. Kayaks and open boats both welcome as well as fancy dress, marathon day, leisurely paddle, and all abilities. Members of Club Paramount provide safety cover at all weirs, but it is possible to portage all these anyway. If you do not have your own boat, or would like to try a different one, kayaks, open boats and all necessary equipment can be hired from kayak control at specially reduced prices for this event.

For further details send sae to: **Chris Perry, Kayak Control, Tower Farm, Longbank, Bewdley, Wores. DY12 2QT Phone/fax: 01299 402683**



Jersey Canoe Club 5th European Sea Kayaking Symposium

Once again the Jersey Canoe Club is hosting the European Sea Kayaking Symposium from 27th May to 2nd June 2000.

As in previous years the Symposium will run for the weekend with an organised paddling programme running during the week. The emphasis will again be on practical water activities with both local and internationally known running clinics on a diverse range of subjects and techniques.

The cost of this non-commercial event for the weekend and following week has been held for the second year running at £85 and includes Saturday night meal. With such a wealth on offer it seems a shame not to go.

Further information can be obtained from: **Jerry Michel, Nyumba Yetu, 46 Clos des Ormes, Verte Rue, St Lawrence, Jersey, UK, JE3 1JJ. Tel: (44) 01534 639390. Website: www.jcc.org.je/ or email kmansell@itl.net**

Year 2000 Wild Water Canoe-Kayak World Championships -

Treignac, France.

The event will take place on the upper reaches of the Vezere at Treignac between the 1st and 4th June 2000. In 1959, Treignac was the first ever downstream, wild water World Championships. This same town will therefore host the first World Championships of the new millennium.

British groups / individuals are invited to stay at a campsite 20 minutes drive from Treignac and 10 minutes from Uzerche. It offers 15 acres of land with 3 small lakes, chalet type bungalows and an English-pub style bar. For more information contact **Mr L. Coker at Moulin de la Geneste, 19140 Condat sur Ganaveix, France. Tel/Fax: (00 33) 555 98 90 08**

Millennium Thames Tour

The Canoe Camping Club is arranging an international 2 week canoe-camping tour of the Thames to be held over the period 22 July to 5 August 2000. Known as the Millennium Thames Tour, the event replicates the 1993 International Thames Tour, canoeing from Lechlade to South Bank, London, SE1. The tour schedule includes some days off the water and in total a distance of 143 miles (230 km), will be paddled down this historic and attractive river. The tour has International Canoe Federation and British Canoe Union approval.

As an alternative to canoe camping, four camping/caravan sites are also arranged en-route to enable the tour to be joined on a daily basis. Also see the BCU website:

<http://www.bcu.org.uk> Booking is now open. For more information and an entry form contact: **Peter Bullamore (MTT), 20 Rostwold Way, Norwich, NR3 3NN**

Tel: 01603 440462 email: Peter.Bullamore@ic24.net



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Disabled Peoples International (DPI) Challenge 2000

DPI is a human Rights organisation committed to ensuring that disabled people across the world are able to achieve full participation, self determination, integration and equalisation of opportunity in structures and services that are at the heart of every community. It is estimated that 500 million people worldwide are disabled. In order to carry out their aims, funding is required. By signing up for a DPI challenge adventurers will enable the DPI to progress faster and in more depth the actions essential to strengthen our voice and determination.

In this exciting new project, DPI CHALLENGE 2000, adventurers will be able to experience the challenge of a lifetime and an expedition of their dreams. They can choose where they want to go from a selection of 19 countries. They can decide when they want to go from a choice of about 70 departure dates. They can select what activity they would like to take part in and how rigorous the challenge will be.

For further information please contact **Kate Lumley, 11 Belgrave Road, London, SW1V 1RB Tel: 0171 8340477**

Club Slalom Series, Marple

April 29th/30th

This is the start of revival of slalom. Whether you're an old timer or have never seen a slalom boat, get in on it. Canoe Slalom must be one of Britain's top sports producing both Men and Women's World Champions in recent years.

Slalom is very simply a test of boat handling skill (and speed) on moving water. You have to get through some 20 gates as fast as possible. Your result depends on both your time and the number of gates you hit. Even if you revisit the same stretch of water the course will always be different so that life is never dull. The river level also changes. This means that every event is different and as well as resting your boat handling you will need to develop some skill at 'reading the water'. You may think that you are good but it may come as a shock to need to place your break-outs within inches rather than yards.

Even if you don't plan to stay with slalom, the skills that you will develop will enable you to enjoy touring more and more safely. Canoeing is regarded as a risk sport and so it is. Slalom is very safe in that the action takes place over a short stretch of river and is under constant supervision.

The Inter Club events have been initiated to restore the club flavour to events which has been lost in recent years. There will be 5 events in 2000 with the results counting towards an annual championship. Hopefully next year there will be more events.

At the weekend there will be time both for individual practice and for club coaching. For clubs who lack experienced coaches there will be experienced paddlers to help with this coaching so that coming to these events can well open access to advice that you have not had before. The events will start with team races on Saturday. In these the 3 members of the team start together and their penalties for hitting gates are added. The scoring format has been designed to level the playing field so that the big clubs have less advantage. At the end of the weekend add all the points scored by each club and the one with least points has won. In each division the first Team gets 1 point and the second 2 and so on. But only the first team in the club will count. There is still an advantage in entering more paddlers for if you can get the first 3 places then the next team will get 4 points. If however you haven't an entry in a class you will still get one more point than the last team entered. Sounds complex but its really quite simple.

ON Sunday the individual runs takes place with Div 4 paddlers having an opportunity to be promoted. The scoring system is similar except that the first paddler gets 2 points and the second 4 and so on. The event is open to ranked paddlers and they will paddle in their own divisions. This should be a great weekend for the club to attend. Its emphasis is on clubs and getting as many members of your club to join in as possible. Apart from scoring points (or keeping the other fellow out) let your hair down and shout for your club. It has been designed to encourage the smaller and weaker clubs to have a go, hence the emphasis on the lower division paddlers.

Apart from the serious side of paddling, this will be an enjoyable social event with lots of chance to get to know your own club mates better and to meet those from other clubs. You can shout at your own paddlers and given fine weather enjoy a barbecue. Other social activities will be arranged.

If you aren't in a club, you can still enter as an individual in the Div 4 event and maybe meet up with a club to join!

So if this is what tempts you, start getting a team together and register an interest with the **Marple Organiser, Paul Newman at 23 Meadowbank Close Holts Village, Oldham, OL4 5PF**. Remember its better to go with a weak team (the others might be worse) than not at all. See you there.

Other events include: 29th/30th July at Stone and Llandysul 7th/8th October Middleton, Shepperton.

Open Canoe Symposium - Glenmore Lodge

9-10th September 2000

This is the second Scottish Open Canoe Symposium and will build on the success on the first one in 1998. This BI -annual event alternates with the Welsh Open Canoe Symposium.

This is a fantastic opportunity to meet other open boaters, to try out new boats, take part in practical workshops, buy equipment from trade stands and work with experienced coaches. An evening programme featuring guest speakers and videos as well as a live band in the Lodge Bar will support the practical programme.

For more information / accommodation please contact **Jo Barclay (Booking Secretary) on 01479 861256**.

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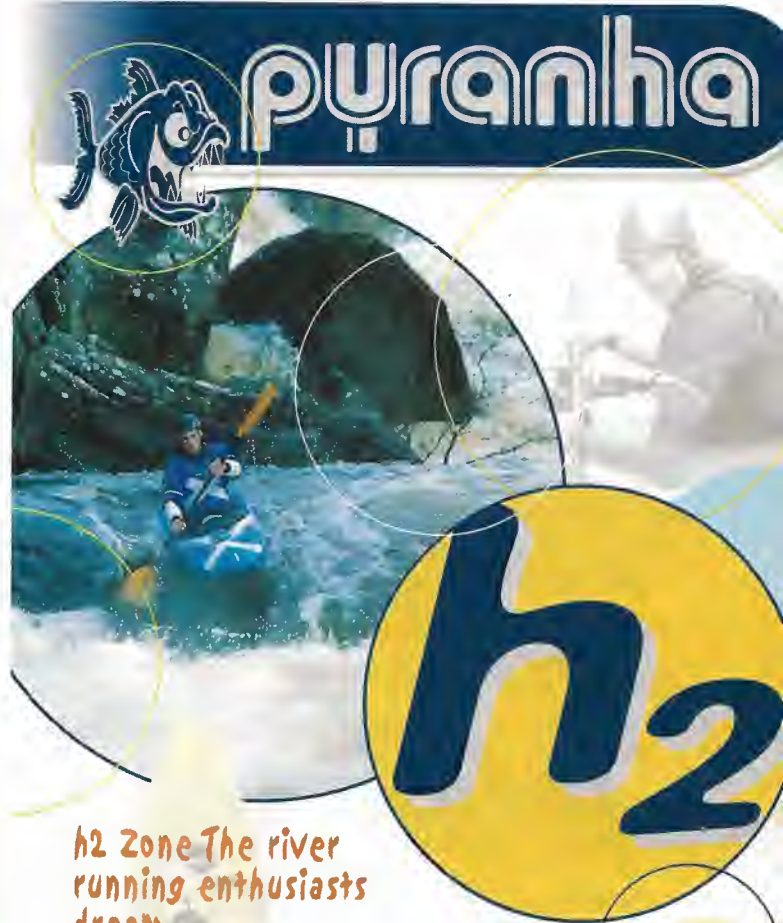
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MORE ACTIVITY

ACCESS news & info

River Tees BCU Right to Roam Lobby

Adam Hearn continues to look after the upper part of the Tees; his patch is from High Force to Cotherstone. The new local access officer for Cotherstone to Winston is

Alastair Rowell, 31

**Sandrigg,
Darlington
DL3 0TY,**

tel: 01325 462108.

Alastair is also local access officer for the Northumbria Greta.

Thank you to all members and clubs who responded to the appeal in December Canoe Focus to write to your MPs and to the Minister in support of the BCU efforts to get canoeing on water included within access to the open countryside. If you have not already done so, please let the BCU Development Service at Nottingham have a copy of your response. The more responses there are, the more likely that canoeing will be taken seriously. We may know in time for April Canoe Focus whether the Government has listened to us all and extended their proposals for access on foot to include access by canoe.

Coarse Fishing Close Season on Canals

BCU efforts since 1994 to have the 3 month close season extended to 4 months have met with no success. The opposite has happened as the Environment Agency Board has decided that the close season on canals should be discontinued; it is up to canal owners to decide whether or not to follow this lead. British Waterways have decided to adopt a 'no close season' policy; to which the BCU has objected. In a letter from their Chief Executive British Waterways agrees that anglers must take account of the impact they have on other canal users, and that an equitable balance of use needs to be achieved. Clubs organising events on canals are strongly advised to work closely with local canal managers so that events can proceed as in previous years.

Sewer Overflows

The Environment Agency tells us that there are 7000 sewer overflows in England and Wales. If BCU members or affiliated clubs are experiencing significant water quality problems with particular overflows, please give details to the relevant regional office of the Environment Agency. Please copy the information to your BCU regional access officer.

Access for Disadvantaged Paddlers

The BCU takes very seriously the provision of equality of opportunity. At present Caryl Quaife, the BCU Access and Development Manager, is a member of an Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Commission working party looking into the practice of making waterways and their corridors more accessible to the disadvantaged. One message that is emerging is that there are many opportunities, but many of the disadvantaged do not get to hear of them. It would be very helpful if members or clubs with experience in this area could let Caryl know, at the BCU office, what opportunities they provide and how they get over the problem of getting their message across to those who could benefit.

New Regional Access Officers

A warm welcome to Jim Russell (Northern Region – Northumbria) and Helen Partridge (Southern Region) who have joined the BCU team of regional access officers. **Jim can be contacted at 8 Millfield court, Hexham, Northumberland NE46 3SQ, tel: 01434 609393;** Helen can be contacted at **51 Horseshoe Crescent, Burghfield Common, Reading RG7 3XW, tel: 0118 983 5093,** e-mail: helenpartridge@ilam.co.uk

They take over from Don Raspin and Peter Sorrell respectively, to whom we say a grateful thank you for all their work.

River Arun

Our appeal in December Canoe Focus for a new local access officer for the River Arun brought an immediate response. We are pleased to announce the appointment of **Steve Fenner who can be contacted at 3 Harting Close, Goring, West Sussex BN12 6AT, tel: 01903 501699.** We are very glad to have Steve on board. As can be seen from the BCU Yearbook there are quite a number of rivers without local access officers; if you can fill one of these vacancies, please get in touch with your regional access officer.

Car Parking

We are getting an increasing number of reports of problems created by the number of canoeists cars at access and egress points. There are cases of cars blocking gateways. Many of our voluntary access officers consider that such problems off the water can be more of an issue than difficulties on the water. We need to be welcomed within the local communities where we canoe. If there is no acceptable place to park where you want to, please move your cars, minibuses and trailers to a suitable place after you have off loaded your canoes.

Dobbs Weir, Lee Valley Regional Park, Hoddesdon

Members are reminded of the following access agreement. There is no access between the following times.

Paddlers can go on between August to Mid March (end of fishing season) Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday afternoons 1pm to sunset. Between the 15th March to 15th June this access is extended to include all weekend. From the 15th June to 1st August there is NO access. (this is extremely important)

The usage fees are the same as for fishing and are collected by the fishing bailiff on behalf of the Lee Valley Park.

Please ensure you follow the agreement, negotiations are underway with the Park and the Environmental Agency, to gain access to other waterways within the park. Please ensure that all sluice gates are left open on completion of your visit. For insurance reasons only appropriately qualified members of the coaching service may operate the sluices. Further information can be obtained from **Ron Hodgson 01992 628403** or e-mail outdoor@hymb.com

Adur Access Officer

Mick Lane is moving to a new job in Cornwall and as a result has had to resign as BCU Local Access Officer for the Adur in West Sussex. We are all very grateful to him for all the work he has done for access on the Adur. The best way to say thank you to him is to ensure that his good work is continued. Volunteers, please, to regional access officer **Noel Humphrey on 0181 6540845**



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MORE ACTIVITY

FEDERALISATION

news & info

Q.
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Federalisation

What's it all about and what does it mean

Background

- When the BCU was established it was as a UK wide body.
- Since 1939 the SCA, CANI and the WCA sought more autonomy and responsibility for canoeing in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales which has been delegated to these associations. The agreements drawn up at that time have been shown to be unsatisfactory to all parties.
- This inevitably led to the BCU becoming, effectively, only English members.

What Started the Process for Change?

- The national associations found that business at Council and specialist committee meetings was overwhelmingly English and so rarely justified the long journeys to attend.

- The English majority left them, even put together, in a minority position.
- Meetings were often held at times and places at which they could not reasonably attend.
- The cost of attending meetings was excessive on their smaller budgets.
- At the same time the English members felt that they were paying a disproportionate share of the BCU UK cost.
- The tensions created by these sorts of issues led your Council to decide to initiate a review in January 1994.

Why Change?

Whilst the Scots, the Welsh and the paddlers of Northern Ireland have enjoyed having their own national associations for many years, the English have had to go along with trying to be both British and

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FEDERALISATION

English. By tradition the English have considered themselves as British first and English second which is a different approach from the rest of Britain. There can be few within the organisation structure who do not believe that England has, to some extent, lost out.

The reality has been that whilst the BCU, made up of English paddlers only as the members of the other nations do not belong to the BCU, has struggled to cater for the interest of the whole country, this has inevitably put English interests to one side.

We initially sought to re-organise in such a way that we resolved these problems by creating an English organisation within the BCU structure. However our solicitors made it quite clear that the result was a company with a legally responsible Board without adequate means of controlling its major spending committee - an English Committee. We have therefore concluded that we must recommend the setting up of a totally separate English Canoe Association (ECA).

The new BCU will be as small a body as it is possible to create and it will be for our representatives on its Board to ensure that it does not grow. As the BCU costs will now be quite separate (from the English costs) and every member of every national association will pay an equal contribution to these costs, it will be in the interest of our representatives to keep these to the absolute minimum.

Criteria for the Review

- The BCU must, in some form, be retained as the UK body.
- There should be no additional committees and certainly no duplication.
- There must be minimal additional cost.

What's in it for the English?

For the individual we do not foresee any noticeable change in subscription levels, some things for which we currently pay being simply transferred to one or other organisation that we still support financially. Members of the ECA, as also members of the other national associations, will have membership of the BCU in addition to their ECA membership.

The new ECA structure proposes an overall reduction in committees and the numbers of people wasting their time attending meetings. More decision making taking place at Management Committee level and the ECA Board concentrating on policy matters and providing the overall leadership. We are moving the decision making closer to the members.

For the first time ever all of our committees will be able to concentrate on English interests without any pretence of seeking to serve British interests. We believe that this will help them to concentrate on furthering our canoeing interests. (Some committees will have delegated responsibility from the BCU for British level business but when this is being considered it will be quite separately from the English business; effectively a different meeting as representatives from the other national associations will be attending).

Major changes in the way in which the regions operate have already been made with Local Development Teams comprising truly local canoeing interests feeding in to the Regional Development Teams. We anticipate that this will bring clubs, members and the ECA organisation much closer together. We look to this streamlined structure to feed paddlers views into the

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FEDERALISATION

organisation in parallel with the discipline specific committees.

We are looking to the membership to take a larger part in guiding canoeing in England forward.

Proposed BCU Structure

- Have a small BCU Board made up of national representatives:
SCA 2 WCA 2 CANI 1 ECA 5

This provides for the smaller associations to have a substantial voice on the Board but also ensures that the English cannot be forced into a decision by the minority groupings.

- Remove the Executive and Federal Committees.
- The BCU will have a Coaching Committee and a Sports Management Group (a committee) only. Both are responsible for British/UK level activity.
- Produce a new agreement between the BCU and the four national associations to meet the new co-operative relationship.

British Business

- The BCU Board will make all British UK decisions delegating issues of coaching and competition to its two management committees.
- The implementation of British UK business will be delegated to existing national association specialist committees. It has been agreed that the eight competitive disciplines will be delegated to the English specialist committees for the period to October 2005.

- The above committees will conduct British UK level business separately from English business.
- When British UK level business is being conducted the meetings will be held at a time and place that all the national association representatives can attend.
- Other items of British UK business will be processed, as the BCU board considers appropriate (eg British UK level liaison with the Coastguard will be delegated to the English Sea Touring Committee).

Proposed English Structure

- An English Canoe Association (ECA) will be established as a separate company.
- The ECA will have a small Board made up of:
Chair
Vice Chair
Treasurer
Development Management Committee (regions) 2
Sports Management Committee 2
Access Management Committee 1
Coaching Management Committee 1
Recreation Management Committee 1
Elected members 3
Specialist committees and advisory panels will report to the above Management Committees.
- The ECA Board will draft regulations to cover the organisation of the committees and panels so as to protect members democratic rights.

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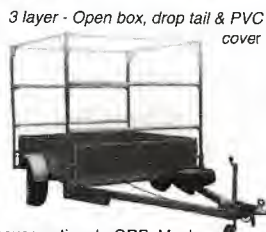
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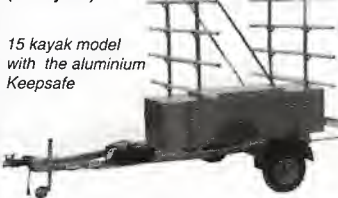
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FEDERALISATION

All UK Paddlers

- Members of the SCA, WCA, CANI and the ECA will have automatic membership of the BCU, ie dual membership. There will be some reciprocal benefits.

Funding

- The BCU Board will set the BCU budget and all the national associations will contribute pro rata to their membership numbers.
- The BCU will meet the cost of all national association representatives attending BCU Board or specialist committee meetings dealing with British UK business.

Further Information

- If you would like to read full details of the 'proposed structures' for the BCU and ECA these can be obtained on request from the BCU office.

What Part do you Play?

These changes have had considerable debate amongst your voluntary officers, as the review was started in 1994, and the result is the considered recommendation of your Board members.

Please make yourself aware of the detailed proposals; satisfy any questions that you have by discussing with your regional, committee or other BCU officer or writing to the office and then please give us your support.

Outcome

- All the national association Councils/Boards support these proposals and consider that they provide an acceptable framework in which they can promote and develop canoeing at a UK and national level.

What Now?

- The legal documents to bring about the changes to the BCU and create the ECA are being progressed with our legal advisors and the formal decision to proceed will be sought from the members at the AGM in March 2000, for the implementation on the 1 November 2000.

The BCU Board asks you to vote FOR the proposals to create separate English Canoe Association and British Canoe Union.

How To Vote:

It is intended (a couple of final legal points being concluded) that the proposal to create a separate English Canoe Association and British Canoe Union will be put to the BCU AGM on the 11th March 2000. The Venue for this event is the National Motorcycle Museum Birmingham n̄ (near the NEC). All members are eligible to attend and all full / comprehensive members are eligible to vote. If you are unable to attend you will find within this magazine a * BCU Notice of AGM Paper. This includes details of how to exercise a proxy vote, along with the official papers on which to cast your proxy vote. Details of the proposal and the final confirmation that the proposal will be put to the AGM will also be carried on the BCU Web Site www.bcu.org.uk Use this to pro-actively steer Paddlesport forward.

* Be sure to check this notice out as this will formally announce that the detail of the proposal has been completed and that it is being put to the AGM on that

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Sea Kayaking

In previous years Mark Evans, a teacher in Saudi Arabia and myself, a policeman based in the Lake District have travelled in the Polar Regions. In 1994 we followed Nansen's route across Greenland and in 1997 we spent some time in the Northwest passage of Canada travelling to the area of the magnetic North Pole, finally in 1998 William Parry's crossing of Melville Island was recreated.

With these expeditions behind us and the enthusiasm to continue we decided to travel to the northern area of Spitsbergen at 80° North. We went to sea in a sea kayak visiting areas where Whalers and North Pole Arctic explorers including William Parry, Andrew Croft, Sandy Glen and Martin Conway had visited in the last 200 years. All of their journeys were well documented and we hoped that we could see some evidence of their presence.

Previously I had paddled in mid-Wales and spent the summers working as a canoe instructor. Mark also had considerable paddling experience in Scotland and Canada, hence the reason we felt kayaking was an independent and practical way of travelling at 80° North and with the added benefit of twenty-four hour daylight we therefore had time on our side.

Norway

Norway governs Spitzbergen and permission to travel had to be sought from its Governor. The island is about the size of Scotland and is the nearest inhabited island to the North Pole.

We were expecting temperatures between 10° Celsius and minus 10° Celsius, for sea ice to impede our progress and the obvious danger of Polar Bear - for which we needed trip flares and a rifle for protection.

We anticipated the costs involved including equipment, flights, insurance, food and fuel to be in the region of £7000 and we hoped to raise this amount through sponsorship. I applied to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship and was fortunate enough to be awarded a grant linked to the Mike Jones Award. With some additional commercial and charitable funding, our financial target was met.

Aside from the journey the expedition was to involve a local Primary school near Keswick, encouraging them to follow and learn from our experiences and the area visited.

We opted for a double 22' foot long Aleut Sea kayak based on the volume and size of the storage holds, made by Valley Canoes which had split bulk heads 10'-12' long. This was provided by Knoydard



Clockwise from top:

- Glacier ice
- Whaler's grave
- Seals
- Nigel and Mark at Heathrow
- The beach
- Mark
- Nice kayak shot



at 80° North



Kayaking Systems of Keswick as were the majority of the clothing and waterproof storage bags.

We used MSR stoves and were able to purchase unleaded petrol locally. The ration packs contained Wayfarer reheatable food and a selection of UK purchased food, which gave us a total calorific intake of 5500 calories per day.

Arrived in Longyearbyen

We flew out of Heathrow on 2nd July 1999 and arrived in Longyearbyen the administrative capital of Spitzbergen after refuelling twice in Norway. The majority of the bulky kayaking equipment had been shipped up earlier in the year from Grimsby, in specially designed wooden crates. We actually slept in the wooden crates on the first night to avoid the expensive camp sites or hotel fees!

Once we had hired rifles, ammunition, collected fuel and trip flares we boarded an old Russian hydrological survey boat, now operated by a Danish Crew, and headed north to Magdalenefjorden on the North West Coast.

It was from here we began paddling North after a brief confrontation with 500 passengers from a German and Japanese cruise ship going ashore for a barbecue breakfast! The route we paddled took in the small uninhabited islands of Danskoya and Amsterdamoya on which were the old English and Danish whaling sites, hut foundations, balloon hydrogen barrels, airship tether points, hundreds of partially covered whalers graves and Whale blubber melting pots everywhere.

A major concern whilst planning the trip, apart from time was the retreating ice edge and whether or not it would inhibit our progress around the northern part of the island. As we paddled through the maze of small islands we met some Government officials who were positioned in various remote locations around the island, as well as coming across some ringbearded seals and an angry stranded swimming reindeer calf.

Polar Bear with a Cub

One late afternoon after a long open water crossing across a Northern Fjord - Raudfjorden we had planned to camp on a small island in front of a glacier, Hamiltonbreen. This was a small island inhabited only by nesting Eiderducks - or so we thought! Once ashore we selected a soft mossy patch of tundra suitable for our tent and then subconsciously scanned the horizon - as we did this we both saw through our shortsighted squint, a quick moving white animal. Once focussed we agreed it was a female Polar Bear

with a Cub: - egg hunting. This had to be the quickest ever recorded launching of an Aleut 2 Kayak. The following night we were both awoken by the Susselmen Officers warning us of an approaching angry male bear, so once more our speed and agility of packing and launching the 22-foot long kayak was tested. After about a week we began to paddle back down along the West Coast, this time passing through Sorgattet, the hut and storage point used by all Polar explorers along whose routes we were following. As we left the hut and the clustered islands in the North, the seas became rougher and the winds stronger. The days usually began with wet launches and ended with wet portages. The seas could swell up to force 4/5 and the waves as high as 3/4metres.

The winds and tides rotated from being with us or against us, this was



Above: Old Russian mine



Left: Freight container

especially a problem when doing some 18 kilometre open fjord crossings. The landscape changed almost daily from being rocky and barren to green and lush, during which we saw all of Svalbard's mammals and counted twenty-four different varieties of birds.

Cold and lonely life

As the 500 kilometre journey neared its end we visited the old Russian mining settlements of Barrentsberg, Colesbukta and Grumentbyen all in varying states of repair, all echoing the cold and lonely life the miners were subjected when the mines were in operation.

On day 21 we returned to



Longyearbyen and our trusty wooden crate! We had paddled 25 kilometres each day enlarged our shoulder muscles and endured a constant wet seat. Apart from slightly blistered hands, neither of us or the Kayak

had suffered any long term damage. Spitzburgen is a spectacular and wild place to visit, which is only a six-hour/£500 plane flight from the Uk and has all the adventure and danger the Arctic can throw at a woolly Kayaker. Incidentally the double kayak is still in Spitzbergen for the next couple of seasons - for hire. ●

Nigel Harling



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Olympic Games



In September 2000 a small group of elite British Paddlers will be representing Great Britain at the Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia.

Only two disciplines of Canoe/Kayak are contested at the Olympic Games – Sprint Racing and Canoe Slalom and the maximum number of athletes who may compete is 350, this is split between Sprint and Slalom as follows 275 for Sprint and 75 for Slalom.

Sprint Racing

Twelve events will be contested in the Sprint Racing competition, nine for men and 3 for women.

Men will be contesting the following classes: K1 & K2 500m, K1 & K2 1000m, K4 1000m, C1 & C2 500m and C1 & C2 1000m. Ladies will contest the 500m distances in K1, K2 and K4.

The right to participate in the Sprint Racing events for the Olympic games is through a qualification event. In 1999 the qualification event for Sydney 2000 was the World Sprint Championships held in Milan, Italy. British athletes secured places for seven athletes (5 boats). Andrew and Steven Train qualified places for the C2 1000m event, with Ross Sabberton and Paul Darby-Dowman qualifying the K2 1000m place, Ian Wynne secured qualification in the K1 500m event and Tim Brabants in the K1 1000m, Tricia Davey qualified the only ladies place in the K1 500m event. Olympic qualification events secure only the boat places and athletes will have to race for selection to represent Great Britain in the May/June selection events. Over the past 2 seasons our Sprint racing Team has been going from strength to strength culminating in the outstanding Olympic qualifications.

Sydney International Regatta Centre

The venue of the Olympic Sprint Racing events is the Sydney International Regatta Centre at Penrith. The course is built on the site of a

former sand and gravel quarry and was opened in March 1996. The 2300 metre course has a consistent 5-metre depth, with rock-coated, wave absorbing banks and a permanent nine-lane Albano buoyed system. As well as the regatta course there is a large training lake which can be used for warm up and cool down.

During the Games there will be seating for 14000 spectators and another 10000 will be able to view the racing from the grassy banks along the course.

Slalom

Four events will be contested in the Slalom events, Men's K1, Ladies K1, Men's C2 and Men's C1. A qualification round and final will be held in each event.

The right to participate in the Slalom events is also



Tim Brabants



Ian Wynne

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S 2000 Sydney - Australia



through a qualification event and in 1999 the World Slalom Championships in La Seu d'Urgell provided the venue for qualification. British athletes secured places for 4 boats (5 athletes), one in each class. At the recent Slalom AGM, World Number 1, Paul Ratcliffe gained pre-selection for the Games in the Men's k1 class. Selection for the remaining places will take place in May 2000.

Penrith Whitewater Stadium

The venue for the slalom events will be the Penrith Whitewater Stadium, which opened in March 1999.

The course is a 'U' shape. The main channel is 320m long and falls 5.5m from top to bottom, it's width ranges from 8-14m across. Above the race start line a 1000 square metre pond provides a warm up area, with a similar pond at the finish of the course.

Six submersible pumps continuously lift 14 cubic metres of water per second to the top pond for release down the course. Competitors put into the course at the bottom pond then access the top pond via a mechanical lift which carries them the 50m up to the top pond at the start of the course.

Rapids are created using a combination of natural stone which is fixed in position and a system of portable and moveable obstacles which allow the course to be varied providing maximum flexibility in course design.

Natural grassy banks surround the entire outer perimeter of the course allowing spectator seating for approximately 5000. During the Games, temporary grandstands will be erected for an additional 7500 spectators.

Olympic Village

Although our paddlers will spend time in accommodation in Penrith they will also have access to the Olympic Village during the Games. The village not only provides accommodation, it also provides, video viewing rooms, a cinema, library, dance club and fully equipped gymnasium.

Competition Schedule

Slalom events will commence on 16 September with demonstration runs for all classes. Qualification takes place on 17 September, for the Ladies and C1 events with the finals being held on 18 September. Qualification for Men's K1 and C2's follows on the 19th September with the finals being held on 20 September 1999.

The Sprint Racing heats take place on 26 and 27 September with the semi finals being held on 28 and 29 October and the finals taking place over the weekend of 30 September – 1 October 1999, this is the final day of competition for all Olympic Events. ●

As **Canoe Focus** goes to print many of our athletes are warm weather training in Florida, South Africa or on the Penrith Slalom Course. We wish them well for their training and preparation and of course, for the Olympic Games in September 2000.
BCU
Performance Director - John Anderson





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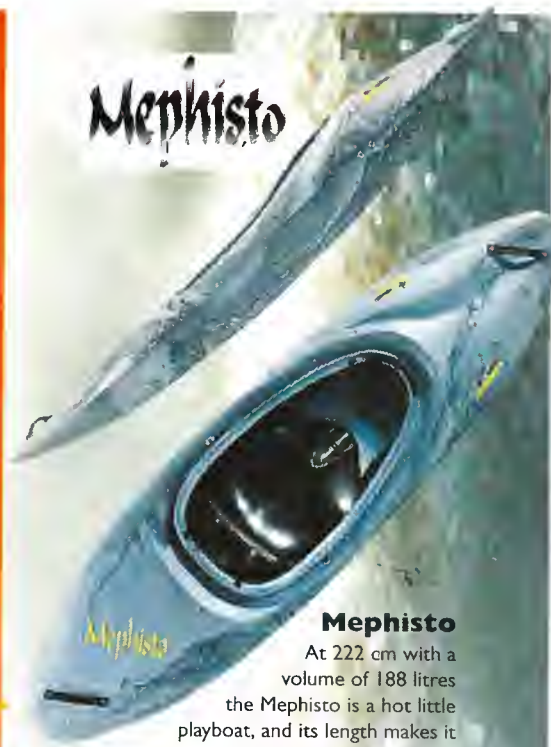


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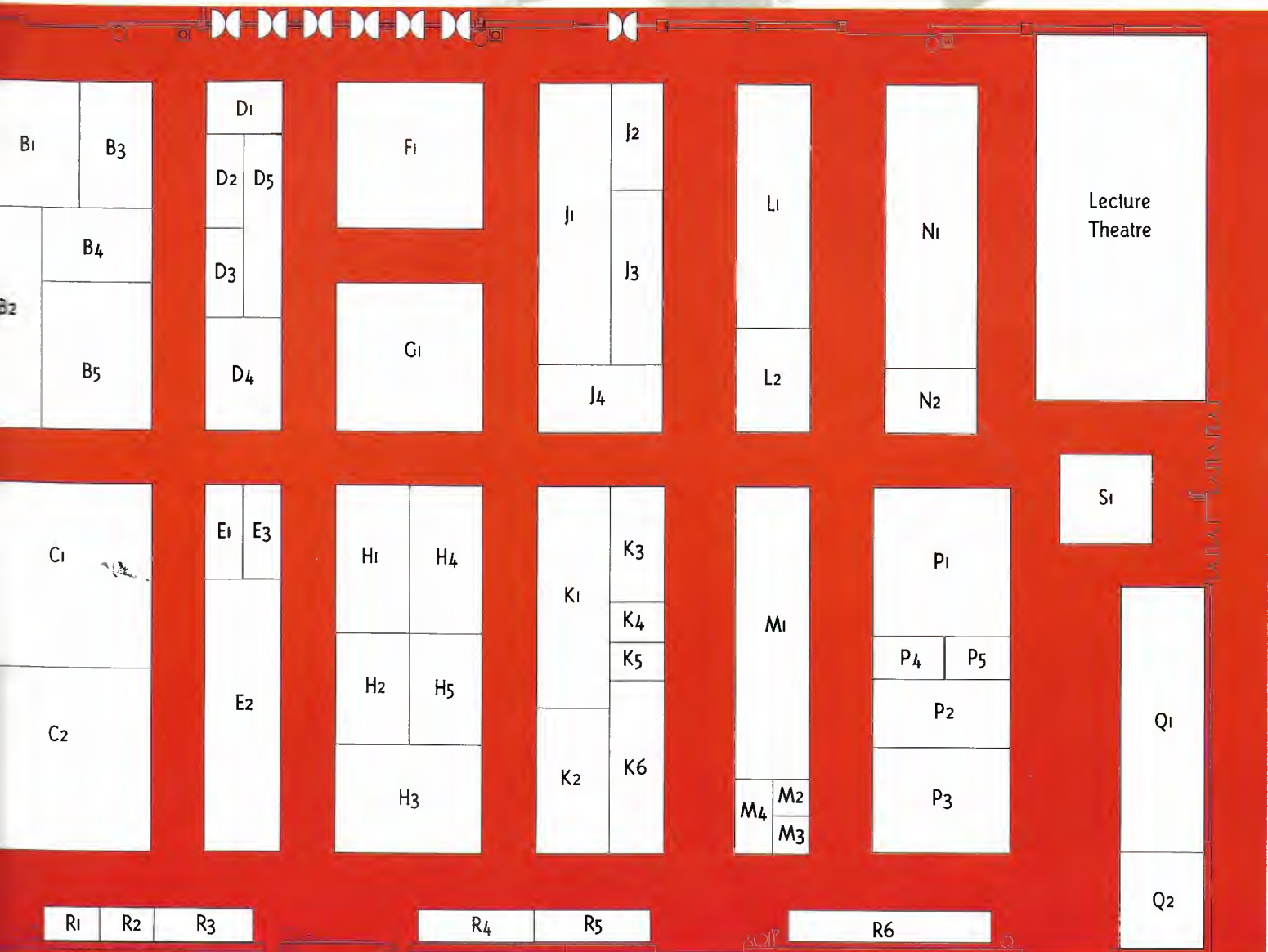
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WORLD CLASS PERFORMANCE competition



Autumns Series, Race 4, Serpents Tail Sprint

Hheavy rain overnight provided perfect conditions on the River Dee for one of the most challenging sprint races on the wild water racing calendar. A quality field assembled to tackle two runs over the Serpent's Tail section. The lowest total time securing the class win. Despite the conditions there were only 5 unfortunate capsizes and no nasty swims, a mark of the excellent boat skills shown by the racers including those who race for fun or were "top athletes" in their day!

Jon Royle of "River Gods" secure the fastest time of the day with two runs of 1min 39secs, one second behind was National Champion Ian Tordoff, both were racing in the elite class. Chasing for the last two places in elite class, the Division A competition was hot. First place went to under 23 Ben Nelson with the 3rd fastest time of the day, he recorded a time of 1min 40 for each run. Close behind was Jamie Christie who won the

sprint at Nottingham.

The course was 800metres long, the Ladies and Canadian classes showed great courage in attacking the last 30seconds, with its irregular standing waves and the violent boils. Yael Ford, earlier this year selected for the World Marathon Championships reminded us of her wild water experience by calmly negotiating the course to win the Ladies event. Junior World Champs hope Mary Jean Smith was 3rd. In the absence of Rob Pumphrey, 5th at this years pre worlds, the C1 event was won by under 23 Andy Hamilton who just beat Andy Reeves, also under 23, on his return from injury.

The C2 combination of Gordon and Terry Walling showed their training was going well with an overall finish place of 24th, their rival crews were away training with the French team, thus leaving the brothers with an easy win.

Lastly, the Cordon brothers showed what a top slalom background can offer, Tom finished 7th in Division A and his brother James 10th both said if they knew they were that quick they would have put more effort in. We look forward to the challenge!

The executive committee would like to thank all who attended the race and evening AGM, and the Llangollen residents for supporting the event.

Martin Streeter

Race Director.



James Lee

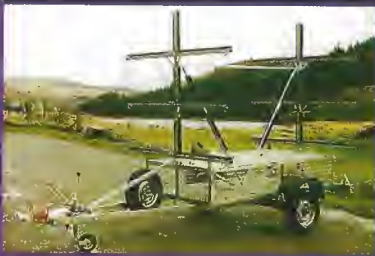
In my report of the 1999 European Marathon Championships (Focus – Dec.99) I wrongly reported that there was a 15 minute gap between the first five places in the C1 race and James in 6th. This was due to an error in the results published by the race organiser. In fact James finished just 5 seconds behind the 5th boat in what was a very close race for 5th, 6th and 7th places. IN doing so he beat the 1999 world silver medalist, the 1998 world bronze medalist and the 1996 world silver medalist.

I have apologised to James for this wrong report and the false impression it has given of his performance. His results from major championships are given below and show a steady improvement towards those elusive medals.

1994	World Championships, Holland	14th
1996	World Championships, Sweden	9th
1997	World Cups Final, Denmark	8th
1997	European Championships, Italy	8th
1998	World Championships, South Africa	5th
1999	World Cups I, Italy	4th
1999	World Cups II, Czech Republic	4th
1999	European Championships, Poland	6th

David Enoch.

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PLAS MENAI



Unempl

Hello there sports fans, here we are again folks at the brink of yet another kayaking adventure brought to you live in Technicolor by those lovable little International Raft Guides Gezza and Lars. I myself have been a full time raft guide now for many a year and I would like to tell you the tale of two young guides temporarily out of work as they waited for tourists to arrive from far of distant lands. To fill our boys rafts with a mixture of smiles and horrified stares, and lets not forget it folks, fill our two raft guides pockets full to the brim with good old beer tokens, hooray! My trusty side kick for this adventure Lars, a young Canadian, looks like he could be out of a 70's Viking movie or something, with his long blonde locks and fuzzy goatee. Quite adorable you might think, but you would be Oh so very wrong, this lovable facade is quickly destroyed for any onlooker when Lars performs his ever so frequent Beavis and Butt head impersonation, horror of all horrors!!! Oh yes sir, with such a worthy accomplice by my side things certainly looked very promising indeed.

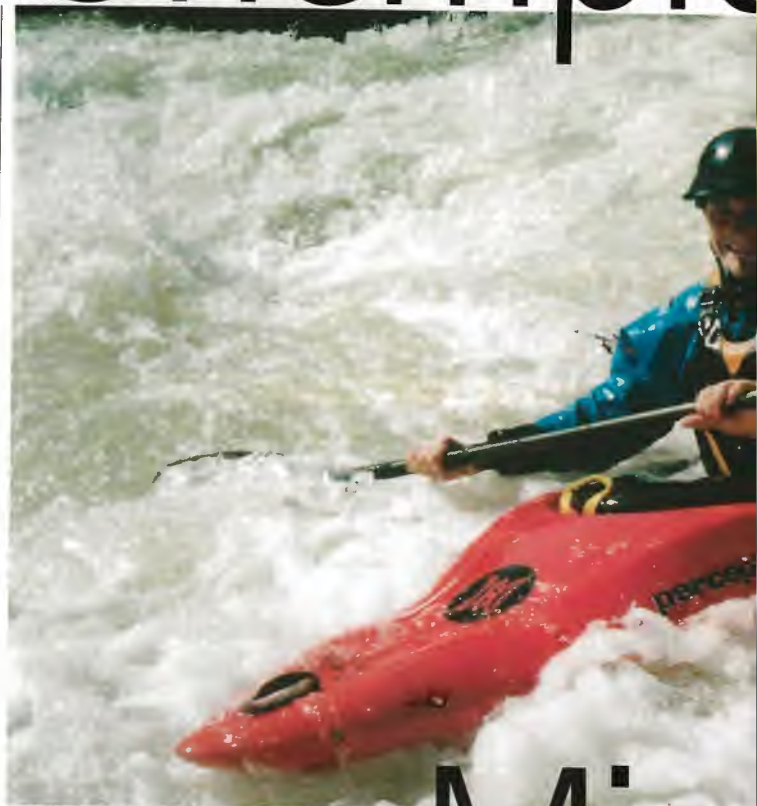
So there I was in Thamel, Kathmandu, I had suddenly realized that there was going to be more chance of my side kick Lars the Viking laying golden eggs to supply our drinking habit than there was of us making any money rafting. It was just like being at home in Wales really in that the unemployment rate seemed to be awfully high. Lars and myself toyed with the idea of starting up the world's first version of the Asian Big Issue for all of five seconds and then decided that this wasn't such a good plan after all.

Let me assure you it really didn't take very long at all to decide. And so the pivotal moment had arrived when Lars the worlds first Canadian Viking and Gezza the worlds first raft guiding member of the Pont Y Pridd Rugby supporters club decided that they should embark on a good old fashioned paddling mission, all you white water enthusiasts out there out will surely agree, good decision. So we left the ancient temples of Katmandu behind us, with their huge effigies of Budda and the odd traditional random goat sacrifice and headed for the hills. You know this hole Hindu sacrificing thing makes the British Sunday service look a little bit tame really, don't you think?.....Oh well if we were all the same wouldn't the world be a boring place that's what my mum used to say.

Lars actually did look quite nice in a dress

And so, plans were made. First on the missions list was the organization of a kayak permit. The kayak permit is a lovely little way the Nepali Government have invented to squeeze just those few extra beer tokens out of your pockets, just for your information. This didn't present too much of a problem however for our two trusty explorers. Within the space of half an hour this was quite successfully taken care of, making use of a modern day photo copying machine down the local book shop and a copy of someone else's original kayaking permit, marvelous!! Unfortunately due to rather low mental capacities on the part of myself and Lars the Viking, we sort of forgot to tip-ex the names out on the original permit, and sort of realized too late, ooooooops. This left us with two options, number one, the trusty quick permit flash method at the police check point, or number two, we were going to have to give Lars a 24 hour sex change operation, one of the kayakers on the original permit being female. So we went for the easy option, Lars actually did look quite nice in a dress, some say a bit too nice!

Mission number two on the list was the acquisition of a kayak from our companies boathouse, without being detected by the management at the Ultimate Descents International Rafting Corporation. Serious cloak and



On a Miss

dagger stuff folks, after deliberation we decided to go for the fool proof, high profile, we're support to be here approach. It worked like a charm, most of the boys from the boathouse remembering us from last season. Things always go full circle though I'm afraid. So I'm simple hanging out for a good clap around the head by my boss at the moment. So I better mention in this article that Ultimate Descents is Nepal's premier rafting company, just to chill the old fella down a little bit, cheers Dave ! With a nice little perception 3D kidnapped, and bidding the boathouse staff a font farewell we carried on our way.

The old Katmandu Bus Park was a hive of activity as always this Tuesday morning, the distinctive taps and whistles of the bus boys being heard everywhere as they helped their bus drivers navigate through a great sea of busses. Getting out of the taxi and untying my kayak to my surprise I realized that the roofrack was still in one piece, miracle! Braking Nepali taxi roofracks is fast becoming a favorite kayakers past time in Nepal and is as common for me as certain American presidents suddenly finding fair maidens appearing in their bed chambers, i.e. often. While Lars is tying the boats on the roof of the bus the only thing I am aware of is the bus boy going on and on about how we have to pay him lots of money to take the kayaks on the bus. That was when I suddenly remembered the kid from last season, when he tried to stitch us up like a pair of kippers with the same old sob story. Unfortunately it was too late for the pretend you only speak Russian gag, as he had already heard me speak English to Lars, dam it! And so it was that the haggling began. Imagine the big dust cloud that cartoonists draw during fight scenes with arms and legs flying everywhere and you have a fare idea of the proceedings. Casualties included the bus boy, an innocent American tourist, two ticket salesmen and a by-standing cat. You've got to be tough if you're going to make it in the bus price haggling wars these days especially in good old Kathmandu.

The rooftop ride on the bus gave us plenty of time to relax however as

yed and



Our resting place for the night the Hotel Bhote Kosi was at long last finally in our sights. Buffalo mo mo's, yum yum, and comfy beds awaited us weary travelers. It's true to say that I do have a place for Barabise in my heart of hearts but it did lose a little bit of its Nepali charm when we were woken at an obscene 4.30am the next morning by a fanfare of bus horns signaling the

first bus departures of the day. Oh well that made it rather difficult to do the conventional, turn the alarm clock off, roll over and fall back asleep, just as well folks, because we were on a mission!!

The mighty upper Bhote Kosi river

Just another few hours by bus and we would be within cat swinging distance of the Tibetan border and within sight of our goal, the mighty upper Bhote Kosi river. Lars and myself thought that the best way to prepare for this little adventure would be to do a wee spot of kayak bus surfing. For this you will require two shabbily dressed kayakers, a smattering of kayak, just a hint of Nepali roof rack with bus, and of course a nice twisty Himalayan mountain road. Combine the ingredients in the conventional manner and shake up and down mercilessly. Lots of huge brace strokes as well as simulated wave wheels at the crest of hills adds to the whole flavour. Happy that our preparations had been more than thorough we dismounted our trusty bus just below the building of yet another one of those evil river devouring dam sights and made our way down a path that led to the river among a growing throng of Nepali bystanders. I mean it's not every day you see a couple of guys hanging around in rubber skirts is it now. This obviously depending on the type of life style you decide to lead, ooerrr misses. Looking downstream at what lay before us Lars commented that not even the hairy chest of David Hasselhof Bay Watch was going to be enough to save us in the event of a swim however it was discussed at length that converting certain parts of Pamela Anderson's anatomy into huge floating life rafts would probably come in very handy indeed, that's enough of that sort of stuff though.



we climbed steadily out of the huge basin which is the Katmandu valley. Before very long condemned looking brick buildings were being replaced by river valleys lined with lush green paddy fields, the gleaming white Himalayan mountain range as always providing a very impressive back drop to the scenery. The highlight of the bus journey for one and all was marveling at Lars the Vikings amazing ability to relieve himself, stealthily hanging onto the back ladder of the bus. This must have been a trick he had learnt from spending all that time on those Viking ships at sea. The hole proceedings were made even more impressive though when you realize that the bus driver was doing his best impression of Damon Hill down twisty mountain tracks normally reserved for Welsh mountain sheep. Being an individual who's had a few near falling of Nepali bus experiences this did seem awfully brave. I'm just glad he didn't go for his gymnastics dismount to finish his routine. Following this little feat of acrobatics we settled into our comfy VIP spots in the cockpits of our kayaks and were in our final destination, Barabise in no time at all.

Barabise is a fair sized town, which rests on the shores of the Bhote Kosi River. It is situated in the Loamasnagu valley, Northern Central Nepal, about a day's drive from Kathmandu. It's a mixture of old and new with traditional Nepali tea rooms resting side by side by huge satellite dishes brought overland from China. Sky Sport is not available yet however while you tuck into your dhal bat (traditional Nepali meal of lentils and rice) and personally I hope it never will be, finger crossed folks! We managed to generate a fair amount of interest as we walked down the main street, it always has been a bit difficult to blend in with a huge bright kayak on your shoulder though.

Class V masterpiece

Snaking our way down the river we used various forms of safety techniques to ensure a safe passage, such as the eddy leap forging technique and rolling cover. You see boys and girls even the likes of myself and Lars paid attention when we were at kayaking school, and it was just as well we did folks because this was going to be a tester. It wasn't very long before we got to the first of our big rapids. The thing on the horizon line was a lovely

class V masterpiece. It had all the markings of a thoroughbred, some cool channeled rock weaving at the start combined with a lovely rock slab accelerator plate into a waterfall at the finish. If that doesn't get you drooling boys and girls there was even some lovely twisting channeled sections disappearing into the distance which looked exactly like the toboggan run at last years winter Olympics, yeah ha!! I went first and Lars my trusty side kick followed, as we approached the toboggan run it all went a little pear shaped however as we realized that we'd slightly miscalculated the gradient on this section. Unfortunately this would appear to be quite an easy mistake to make when your looking down at a section of water from high up, that's my excuse anyway and I'm sticking to it!! The results included some impressive nose stands, tail squirts, rock splatting and stopper blasting. I believe that you would have require a team of professional rodeo judges to piece together the different moves



that were being done by our boats, and not necessarily by us, in that short but quite intense 20 second interval that followed. It was revealed at an international conference of sports psychologists later that year that you really could actually smell fear during the aforementioned 20 second interval, and that it didn't necessarily smell good. It definitely left us with eyes the size of family dinner plates, that's for sure!!

Moving on through boulder gardens that contained enough rock to conduct a large scale landfill project we came upon another section that definitely deserves a mention. The boulder that formed the main moves on the rapid was about the same size as an overland truck and made us feel about the same size as two little garden peas. I wasn't scared though. I've eaten enough pot noodles in my time to know what risk taking is all about. So off we

went little

Viking garden pea and Tom Jones garden pea rolling down an almost channel like entry shoot that shot us out onto a slab of rock, dumped us into a big boily foaming pool, before spitting us out down a waterfall, a little bit chewed around the edges for our troubles, but, fun, fun, fun !! People that get their kicks out of doing stranger things than this are usually given jail sentences for their efforts and normally involve members of parliament. Such allegations against myself concerning blow up sheep and large amounts of lager are unfounded and slanderous by the way, just so that you know.

This rapid marked the end of the upper Bhote Kosi section, only one portage, and lovely classic class V rapids with some great continuous class IV boulder gardens. It was time for a well earned cup of tea so we stopped off at the Borderlands holiday resort on the way, this is easily recognizable from the river as little straw roofed huts on river left.



Thanks

Could I also give a quick special thanks to Peak UK and Perception for their support over the years, see you on the river folks!!

Gezza



In the bar Lars the Viking began yarning this group of girls opposite us, and was actually making some headway, managing to keep his infamous Bevies and butt head impression under raps, good on ya' son. Not to worry though I managed to blow him out of the water with the old corny classic kayaking one liner of , " didn't you know ladies, only real men wear skirts!" always a winner. So mission accomplished, and Lars fast falling to ground in a huge thundering ball of flame, failing to make a recovery after my handy work we decided we might as well return to the thing we love and trust the most, our lovely little kayaks.

The class V section bellow the Borderland holiday resort is the closest commercially rafted section of white water to Kathmandu, and is therefore a very popular trip amongst tourists with limited time to spend in the country. This section is a fair bit less demanding than the top section, but is nevertheless very enjoyable. Some of the delights in store include 'Gerbil in the Plumbing'

and 'Frog in the Blender' which manages to convey quite well to the reader, I think, the type of feelings that you would experience if you were to swim down any of these rapids, ouch!! . Rafting clients certainly seem to be very willing to do what you tell them to do once you explain to them that a rapid named 'frog in a blender' is coming up

around the next bend. Maybe, just maybe this whole rapid naming thing is an undercover M15 conspiracy to fast track people into gaining large amounts of river respect, in very short amounts of time, thus making the river a safer place for everyone, mmmmm.

Congratulated ourselves

With our little mission almost at a close and with the sun gently setting over the Lomasangu valley silhouetting our two little adventurers against the back drop of Barabise the only thing left for us to do was to make our way back to the Bhote Kosi Hotel for a well earned feed and some R & R. Sitting down to dinner that evening we congratulated ourselves on a new addition to a long string of kayaking missions and committed all the events to memory so we could remember this fine day far into the future. When all of that stuff was out of the way we set about inventing some huge whopping juicy porkers we could tell the boys when we got back to Kathmandu. I mean you've at the very least got to agree about where on the river you put in!

So if there's any of you out there who aren't scared of eating the odd pot noodle or two and like your kayaking served up with a large side order of stunning scenery I suggest you go and have a play on the Bhote Khosi. If any of you are indeed traveling out to these parts invaluable information on logistical considerations, current water conditions on this river, as well as on any other river in Nepal can be obtained from the author of the White Water Nepal guide book at Ultimate Descents International rivers@ultimate.wlink.com.np Just remember a kayaking holiday in Nepal will not cost you much more than a kayaking holiday to Europe due to the amazingly favorable exchange rate in Asia, so get out there and do it folks, it's a kayakers paradise! ●

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so quiet you can reach out and touch the silence. This is the land of Tweedsmuir.

Logistics

I flew Heathrow to Vancouver, transferred to the Hilton Vancouver for one night, before flying on to Prince George where I was met by Mike the guide and transferred by car to the Tweedsmuir Wilderness Ranch to meet the rest of the group. At the wilderness ranch we stayed one night to prepare for the eight day canoe trip. After the trip I had one night at the ranch before transferring back to Prince George to fly to Vancouver and then on to London. The whole trip was well organised and ran as smoothly as clockwork.

I travelled with:

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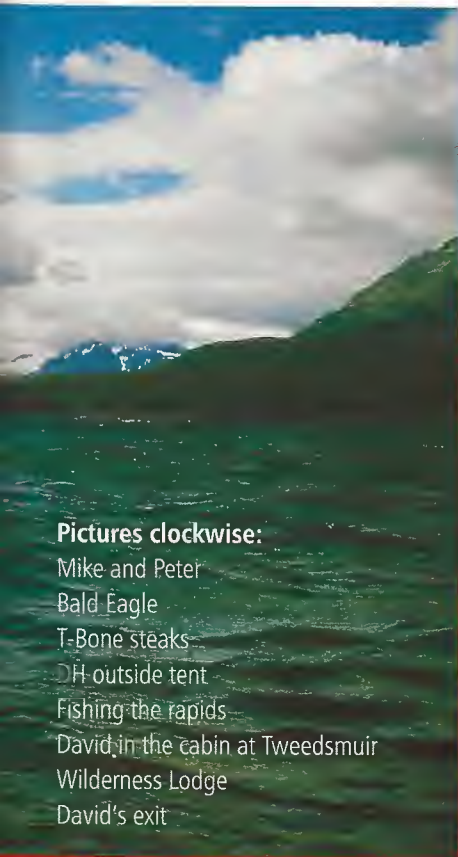
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Tweedsmuir Provincial Park is situated 530 kilometers north west of Vancouver in British Columbia, Canada. Covering almost a million hectares Tweedsmuir is the largest park in British Columbia, and its northern area is dominated by high mountains covered by permanent snow and ice fields. It is one of North America's most magnificent wilderness areas. It was named after Baron Tweedsmuir the 15th Governor General of Canada, and he said of the park; "I have now travelled over most of Canada and have seen many wonderful things, but I have seen nothing more beautiful and more wonderful"

I was one of a group of four who had first met at Tweedsmuir Wilderness Ranch to prepare for an eight day journey in the Tweedsmuir Park. The others in the group were Mike the guide and owner of the outfitting company, Peter, a friend of Mike, who came from Germany, and David, a Canadian. We entered the wilderness park via a trip in a jet boat to the Chikamin Bay Park

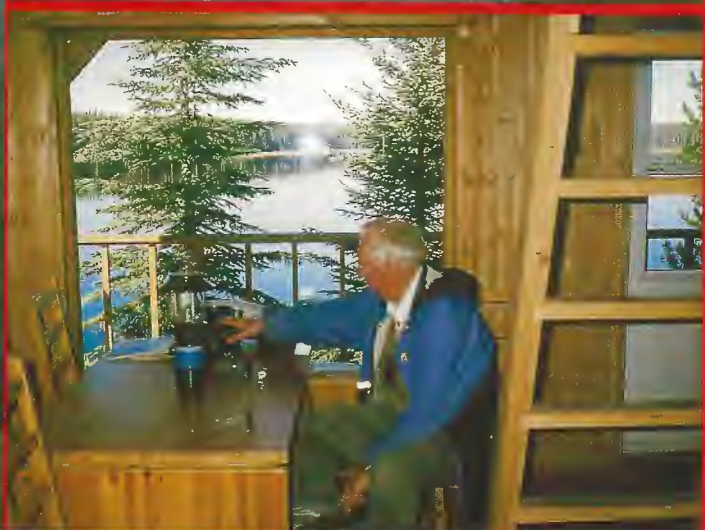
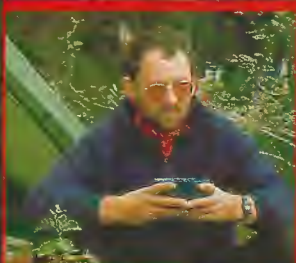


North West Wind



Pictures clockwise:

Mike and Peter
Bald Eagle
T-Bone steaks
OH outside tent
Fishing the rapids
David in the cabin at Tweedsmuir
Wilderness Lodge
David's exit



A canoe trip through Tweedsmuir Provincial Park

Headquarters, portaged over the 350 metre divide, using the portage trolley provided, and then paddled off into the wilderness. I paddled with David, who at eighty-odd and a seasoned wilderness traveller, must have become a little tired of my almost constant use of the exclamations of "wow", and "gosh", as different views came into sight; but the views were absolutely stunning.

Campsites are maintained in the park by the park ranger service and the camps have fire pits, tent pitching squares, tables, and a well stocked (dunny, loo, outhouse, powder room, toilet, washroom). In natural untouched temperate forest, it can be difficult to find areas to camp wild, and in doing so, you are damaging some of what you have come to see. In the canoeing areas of Eastern Canada there is always an afternoon rush for camping spots, but out in the west there is just no one around.

Mixture of Delia Smith, Keith Floydd and one of the chaps out of ZZ Top

Our group was fortunate to have Mike along as our guide. Thankfully roughing it in the outdoors does not enter into Mike's head; we all slept on thermarests, and were woken every morning about eight o'clock with a knock on the tent, a "good morning", and a mug of fresh coffee. One of Mike's passions is food, and when it comes to the actual cooking, he's a mixture of Delia Smith, Keith Floydd and one of the chaps out of ZZ Top. For breakfast there was usually fresh fruit, cereals and bacon and eggs, all washed down with steaming mugs of fresh coffee. During the day we survived on fruit drinks, chocolate bars, fresh fruit and bagels which were filled with all manner of meats and cheeses, but it was the evening meals which were gastronomic delights! Mike provided us with sumptuous dinners which usually started with hors d'oeuvres such as oysters and crackers, with ice tea, and followed with a main meal of mouth watering spaghetti bolognese (parmesan cheese optional), pork steaks, and even T-bone steaks. With every evening meal we had a different fresh salad and there was always a pudding provided. I hope my mum does not read this but I have never eaten so well in my life, and all of this in the outdoor environment. It is a tribute to his mastery of the art of outdoor living, his experience, and prior planning.

The majority of the paddling in Tweedsmuir is on lakes, but here is the best place to learn about canoe travel on big, big lakes. Sometimes we rose early to take advantage of the early morning calm to cross large areas of exposed, open water. On one occasion we were stormbound for half a day during the trip, but with no fixed itinerary, and with plenty of time, it was an advantage. As it provided the opportunity to look at the area around camp in detail, catch up on your sleep, read a

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book or just sit and chat with the others in the group.

The natural forest begs to be explored, and for someone, who is new to the area, a root about in the undergrowth looking for plants and fungi turns up numerous new species. Most of the plants were new to me but I could classify them into families, the fungi were a little easier to classify and there was plenty of coloured Russulas sp.

about. The trees were dominated by Lodgepole Pine, which, when damaged by animals, exude a large amount of sap which hardens on the tree, and I guess in the fullness of time, might be fossilised into amber. The trees were adorned with many types of lichen from brightly coloured species through to the long tresses of 'old-mans-beard' hanging from every branch and twig; an indication of the purity of the air. Normally in Europe when we go rooting around looking for wildlife we try to be as quiet as possible, but out in bear country the idea is to stamp about and make as much noise as possible. Singing and whistling are encouraged, and even the wearing of bear bells is advocated (pack your Morris dancing costume), all in a effort to make the bears aware that you are around. Bears are only violent to people if they are startled or if you come between them and their young or food, most of the time they will choose to leave you alone and get on with their lives. While travelling by canoe there are wild goats and sheep to be seen on the mountainsides, inquisitive squirrel and glimpses of moose, woodland caribou and many different species of bird such as the majestic bald eagle, belted kingfisher, and Steller's Jay. Some of the insect life tends to come looking for you, but with a bug net on the door of the tent and armed with various repellents



Above left: David. **Above:** The beach
Left: David relaxing

they are not that bothersome for most of the time. During our time in the park we saw the odd fishing boat and float plane, and only met six other canoeists. The canoeists, although they lived locally, had only just discovered the wonder of Tweedsmuir and they said that it was a great place and that they would be back again soon.


We managed to catch a couple of trout, which were gutted and cooked as soon as they were landed. They were mouth-

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wateringly scrumptious but if we had had to feed ourselves we would have been very hungry indeed. The fishing throughout the year in Tweedsmuir had not been good as that part of Canada had had a cold wet summer but we were happy with the ones we got.

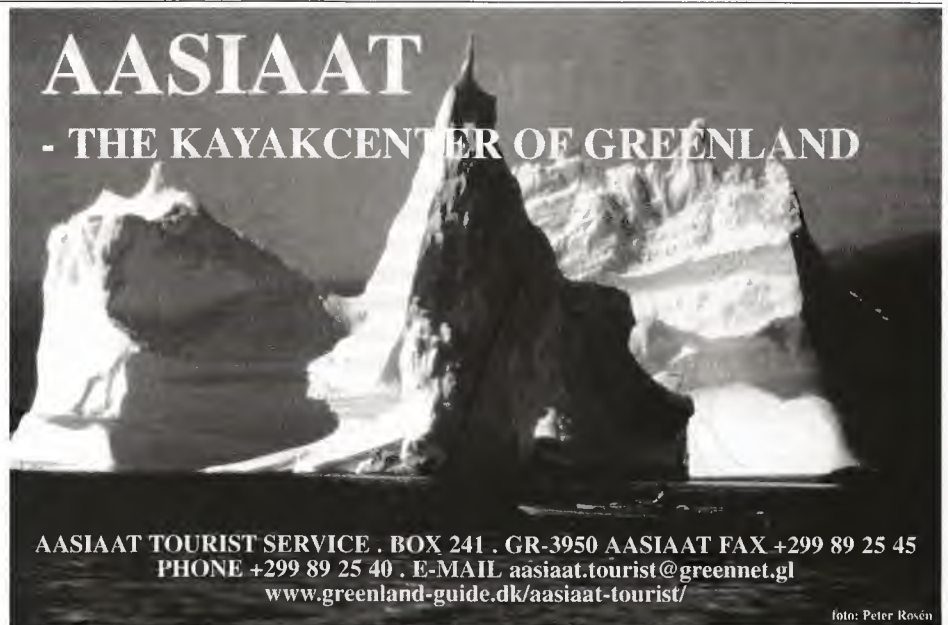
For me the trip was a great success; meeting new friends and travelling through an unknown area by canoe to view the natural environment. British Columbia is well worth considering as a canoeing destination as it can offer vast areas of true untouched wilderness; many of its mountains are unnamed and many are unclimbed. There are not the crowds of the east and there are enough white water rivers and lakes to satisfy any taste in paddling; I even saw a group of play boaters touring in the area. Tweedsmuir in particular is relatively unknown, even many Canadian paddlers do not know of its existence, as the man says 'I'll be back'.

For a Tweedsmuir Wilderness cocktail, take 2000 metre mountains and add a little snow and ice, cloak with natural pine forests, fill the air with the heady scent of resin, and surround them all with crystal clear water. A Tweedsmuir Wilderness cocktail is best imbibed slowly with a group of friends, but there is a worrying side effect: it's addictive, you do not want to go home, and once home you want to come back.

The canoes we used were Old Town 174

and the paddles provided were constructed of aluminium and plastic. All trips can be tailored to your requirements from a full outfitting with a guide and food provided to just the canoes being supplied. Mike the outfitter as well as offering stimulating canoe/camping trips prides himself in the cuisine offered on his tours and if what we sampled was anything to go on then your stomach and taste buds are in for a great treat too! ●

Dave Halsall



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PADDLER'S GEAR reviews

The Freestyle UK Team go out to the World Championships, New Zealand with Chill Cheaters



Four members of the successful British Freestyle Team, Richard Chimes, Paula Floyd, Oliver Castle and Lorna Williamson who competed at the recent championships in New Zealand were provided with the latest paddling gear supplied by Reed Chill Cheater. The lightweight tops proved very useful with the changeable weather conditions we found in NZ – the days could change from being very hot to reasonably chilly, especially early in the mornings, when

most of our training had to be done.

The gear proved to be a good fit, warm, stretchy and light, which made it ideal for freestyle paddling. We used them as both a thermal layer under a dry top for paddling, and



sometimes just on there own. As team manager I was in and out of the water a lot, and so the short sleeved thermal top which I wore, proved really useful for standing about on the river bank, as well as paddling in.'

Ollie Castle, team member said, 'The worlds were in New Zealand, and they were cool. All the top paddlers were

going off big time, which made the competition hot. The wave was big and fast and the sun was shining, so it was great. I came 24th which was not bad. We did spend a lot of time sitting around in eddies so it made all the difference having my Chill Cheater thermals, I would have got cold if it were not for this gear.'

Reed Chill Cheater: The worlds lightest wetsuit?

With a choice of garments ranging from vest tops and skull caps to long sleeve tops and Pre-bent long trousers you can cover yourself in the stuff. Advertised as 'The equivalent of a 2mm wetsuit in water.' And ideal for summer use. (shame I was testing it in December!)



The Chill cheater provides a thermal barrier similar to a traditional wetsuit, but is lighter, more flexible and is much easier to get on and off. The smooth polyurethane outer surface sheds water quickly minimising the effects of wind chill. This new material provides insulation from wind and water and also gives a complete protection from UV rays. It has also been awarded millennium product status by the design council of GB. Sounds fantastic. This piece of kit gave a lot of freedom of movement and the material does feel great, but for kayakers I feel is only going to be a summer alternative to a shortie cag. As wearing it under a winter cag I didn't feel

that there were many advantages over a thermal. For more information visit www.chillcheater.com
Review by Rich Taylor



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PADDLER'S GEAR

Wild Water Bumskin Shorts



Made from Wildskin these Bumskins are the comfiest item I have ever paddled in. The fabric is of the same

breed as some Cag-decks that are currently on the market. The fabric has a stretchy polycarbonate outer, which is both windproof and breathable. It also gives good contact with the boat and is not slippy when wet. The inner is a thin stretchy lycra fleece which is bonded to the outer. Even when wet they retain a warm and luxurious feel. The cut is very good with a high back on the shorts and a useful draw cord so there are no

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QT International Limited of Bristol has developed and patented QuickTide. For more information, please contact **Duncan Ogilvie, 19 Canynge Road, Bristol B58 3JZ** telephone 0117-973 6688, fax 0117-973 6699.

annoying bare patches. On cold days, and we've had a few in the north, they keep you feeling warm and snug. When worn under a set of dry trousers or salopettes they make an excellent thermal layer. Compared to neoprene the shorts are warmer, more comfortable and easier to wear for long periods, well worth the purchase.

Wild-Water Freeflow Plus Buoyancy Aid

Having paddled with a slalom cut Buoyancy Aid for the last few years the freeflow from Wild Water is nothing new. The cut and fit of the Buoyancy Aid are very similar to other slalom cut models on the market allowing enough freedom for the most aggressive of moves. There outer is made from a thin nylon material unlike the thicker cordura that can be found on other buoyancy aids of this style. Despite having had some 'hammer' recently there are no signs of wear and should make no difference to the durability.

Not having a chest harness fitted means the main feature is the pocket. This is perhaps one of the more useful I have seen. It has two zipped entrances which makes access easy, if your left/right handed or need to get at stuff while in a difficult eddy. The pocket is made from a strong mesh, which allows enough space to fit a number of items, but stays unobtrusive. When empty the pocket stays close to the fabric and you almost forget its there. All told this buoyancy Aid is well cut and made, and although makes no fashion statement to the world of freestyle it will give plenty of good service whatever the discipline.

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Through Africa by klepper



Mne Al 'Bugsy' Baker and LCpl Dave Abrutat

About four years ago, and only a few hours after completing the DW, a friend suggested we paddle the length of Botswana's Okavango Delta together. We agreed to give it a try one day and then, like so many good ideas, forgot all about it.

Until, that was, I passed through Botswana during summer 98. Whilst there, I met a South African safari guide who agreed to sort out the logistics for us, and various other friendly souls who volunteered their time to help us. The expedition plan was reborn.

Back in the UK, we realised that a two-man team was probably not big enough. Six people in three boats would be a better number, we thought, bearing in mind the danger from animals. Originally we planned for this to be five Brits plus the guide, but as time went by we realised it the impracticality of trying to teach a Botswanan to paddle a canoe, so planned upon having a support boat accordingly. It did not take too long to find another four DW veterans to join us, and the organisational tasks were quickly divided up amongst the team.

The Okavango River runs from central Angola through Namibia and into Botswana, where it fans out into a 16,000-sq km delta (about the size of Wales). The river never finds the sea, evaporating instead in the heat of the Kalahari Desert. At its northern edge is the village of Shakawe; at the southern edge the town of Maun. In between them is a vast, unspoilt wilderness, populated by some spectacular animals and birds including an amazing number of hippos and crocs. The aim of our six-man team was to paddle between the two over a two-week period, and raise some money for the Royal British Legion in the process.

Detailed maps of the area

This sounds much more straightforward than it actually was. The only detailed maps of the area were produced by Ordnance Survey in 1971 and in a shifting landscape of sand and water, they were unreliable at best. We packed a GPS as well, but in the knowledge that the positions it indicated would not always tally up with features on the map, so an element of guesswork was likely to be called upon. In addition, the channels were likely to be blocked with vegetation, which might slow us down considerably. And finally, we had the presence of the local wildlife to consider. Hippos are fiercely territorial animals, and a hippo attack had brought a South African expedition to an unhappy end in 1997.

In Maun we met our guide, a veteran of the Rhodesian bush war called Mike Watson. He came equipped with a small aluminium boat plus outboard, and was to prove an immensely valuable asset. Having cleared the necessary African bureaucracy, we then travelled overland to our start point at Shakawe, where we assembled the kleppers and made camp for the first time.

The boats had already been fully assembled and checked back in the UK, but it was still a relief to see that they were all in working order! It was late afternoon by this stage, so we set out onto the Okavango river for a quick trial run before the sun set. Our first encounter with the local wildlife did not take too long – crocodiles adorned both banks, including one 18' beast, which slid into the water as we paddled up for a closer look.

The next morning dawned chilly and bright, and we wasted little time in getting onto the water. The flow on the river was better than we had hoped, and added about two knots to our speed. Unhappily, the good it did us was undone by the tremendous meanders on the river, which swung east and west by as much as three km in places. By the end of the day, our hot and tired team reckoned to have travelled about 80km down the river. The GPS told us we had only done about 30km as the crow flies, so we knew we had to knuckle down to some more long days in order to keep up our daily mileage.

Endless papyrus reeds

Days 2 and 3 were very similar. We managed about nine hours paddling along a very monotonous river bounded by endless papyrus reeds. The occasional hippo or croc disappeared into the water as we approached, and fish eagles soared overhead, sometimes swooping onto the water ahead of us. We made good time, and by the end of the third day, we had reached the point where the delta begins to divide. On top of that, Mike had caught a couple of bream, which made a nice addition to our boil-in-the-bag rations.

As the channels divided, the current weakened and the papyrus began to close in, blocking the river completely in some places and forcing us to cut a path through it. This slowed our progress hugely, but we had anticipated it to some degree and thus continued to make our designated nightly stopping points, at least for the next few days.

On day seven though, the blockages became absurdly thick. We hacked through the reeds almost all day, enjoying the occasional lagoon or area of open water where we could paddle freely again. But as night time

approached, we were still two km short of the island where we planned to camp and a night in the kleppers seemed on the cards. At the eleventh hour, we stumbled across a tiny island – actually a termite mound – and jumped ashore, grateful for a dry stopping point. The thing measured 20' across, and provided just enough room for us all to lie down around a fire. No room for the tents though, so the mosquitoes had a field day.

On the eighth day, we finally broke out of the papyrus. Our maps depicted a large river flowing out of the lagoons we had entered, but instead we were met by a vast area of grassy swamps. The kleppers were brilliant – we could paddle almost unhindered through the grass. But the support boat's propeller became fouled almost immediately and we ended up physically dragging it through the marsh grass. We covered several km this way, but still there was no sign of our river. At the end of the day, camped on an island that was home to dozens of hippos, we used our Satphone to call in an aerial recce.

It arrived shortly after dawn the next day, and the pilots brought bad news: the river was nowhere to be seen, and the only channel running towards Maun was over 10km away. Given more time we could have paddled it, but we did not have enough days to spare. We had managed about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the whole trans-delta route, and were only 100km from Maun. It was time to call it a day, so somewhat despondently we headed west, hoping to find an overland trail at the edge of the delta from where we could be picked up by Landrover.

Picked up we eventually were, and with spirits once more in the ascendant, we made our way back to Maun. It was a slightly disappointing outcome, but we had paddled roughly as far as Jevan Berrange's expedition in 1996, but considerably faster, and Maun's residents bought us a huge number of beers to help us celebrate. We owe a huge debt of thanks to our sponsors: Lendal, Air Namibia and Bloc Sunglasses. ●

Here's to Okavango 2000 and finishing the job off!

Article by Harry Taylor

The team at the extraction point

Capt Tom Tarnowski enjoying yet another papyrus blockage



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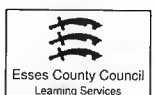
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Three-year fixed term contract

The National Association of Clubs for Young People is one of the country's leading youth work charities. It offers a diverse national programme of participative activities to more than 400,000 young people to further their personal and social education. Over 2,500 clubs are affiliated to NACYP, through 45 County and major City Associations.

NACYP runs a remotely situated residential centre at Glenborrodale on the Ardnamurchan Peninsular. The Centre has the annual capacity to allow up to 1,000 young people to spend a week there. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and ideally situated to be developed as an outdoor pursuits centre (initially offering rock climbing, mountain walking, abseiling and canoeing). NACYP now wishes to recruit a warden in residence able to:

- Conduct and supervise specified outdoor pursuit activities.
- Maintain the buildings, facilities and grounds.
- Develop environmental programmes for visiting groups.

Single applicants are invited, but the job may lend itself to a division of responsibilities between a couple.

The Successful applicant(s) will have at least one year's experience of working in a youth work setting, be suitably qualified to conduct the specified outdoor pursuits and have some property management experience. Some weekend and evening work will be required.

For an applicant pack, please write to:

**NACYP (GW)
371 Kennington Lane
London SE11 5QY**

Or fax: 020 78209815

Or e-mail: cmb@nacyp.org.uk

The closing date for applications is 10:00 a.m. Friday, 11th February 2000. Interviews will be held at Glenborrodale on Wednesday, 23rd February 2000.

NACYP is committed to Equal Opportunities.

OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS

required at children's outdoor education centres in Europe

EXPERIENCED CANOEISTS

For April - October 2000
short or long contracts

Should be BCU Level 3 Coach (or equivalent) for River Leader and at least BCU Level 2 Coach for support positions. Must be over 21, ideally with other outdoor and language skills and have the relevant experience to lead groups of children on descents through the Ardèche gorge, France.

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**Department 120, Personnel Office, Village Camps, 1260 Nyon, Switzerland.
Fax 00 41 22 990 94 94 Email: personnel@villagecamps.ch**



Instructing In Southern Ireland Shielbaggan Outdoor Education Centre

Operates under the auspices of the Co Wexford Education Committee. Its residential activity centre provides a year round programme. Shielbaggan is looking for enthusiastic, qualified, motivated and happy people for its Year 2000 programme. Ideally candidates should have a range of coaching qualifications in some of the following activities: Canoeing, Sailing, Windsurfing, Climbing, Archery, Snorkelling and Orienteering. As well as working hard in an enjoyable environment with other enthusiastic staff, you can make use of your time off to do your thing in the rest of our country. The centre is located an hour from the ferry-port of Roslare which has direct sailing's to Pembrokeshire in Southern Wales.

**Send your CV and a letter about your wonderful self to Ken Kelly:
Shielbaggan OEC, Ramsgrange, Co Wexford, Ireland.
E-mail shielbaggan@eircom.net**

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BCU level 3 coaches

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Experienced rafters

Qualify up to SRA guide/trip leader level before guiding Alpine rafting trips on the Durance.

Training courses take place between February and May and you will work right through to early Autumn.

For a gateway to a career in outdoor education or for a unique opportunity to build on your qualifications and gain valuable work experience plus accommodation, meals and a weekly wage, contact:

Recruitment Department, PGL Travel,
820 Alton Court, Penyard Lane,
Ross-on-Wye HR9 5GL
Tel: 01989 767833
E-mail: recruitment@pgl.co.uk

www.pgl.co.uk/personnel



WANTED! WATERSPORTS INSTRUCTORS

We need lots of energetic people to work as watersports instructors at our outdoor adventure centres for children in the UK and at Center Parcs villages in Europe from January 2000.

Canoeists ideally should be at least 3 Star (Canoe or Kayak) however if you are a keen

paddler we also organise BCU training and assessment courses during the season. All instructors also receive training leading to other land based National Governing Body qualifications. If you are a keen paddler give us a call today for a recruitment pack.



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'Don't try th

The Amazon S

Following 18 months out of Slalom Canoeing due to a serious shoulder injury I was back racing at the start of the season with high hopes of qualifying for the World Championships in Spain. Unfortunately I narrowly missed out on a wild card place and I was left wondering what to do over the next few months.

However, on my return from the race I received a message from London Weekend Television on my answer machine....offering me a trip of a life time..... What perfect timing!

'Helen, how do you fancy taking member of our studio audience down the Amazon?'

'Don't try this at home', Saturday nights' primetime crazy challenge show (with audience of 13 million) had chosen Emma Haywood, a hairdresser from Telford, to be part of the 'Super Challenge'. The biggest challenge ever staged by the show, filmed as a video diary to be shown each week of the new series.

Canoe expert

My role was as the canoe expert, along with being Emma's companion (3 weeks away from civilisation with her child and husband at home would have been a challenge in its self!)

The journey took almost 24 hours, flying to Texas, then on to Lima. The group was small, just Emma and I, Sue the camerawoman / producer and Dave the sound recordist. We got on exceptionally well – a huge bonus.

Once in Peru we were in the very capable hands of Paul Cripps and his staff from 'Amazonas Explorer', who looked after us for the duration.

The trip comprised of two 'adventures', starting with a five day canoe expedition down the source of the Amazon, followed by white water rafting down some of the toughest sections of the worlds greatest river.

We were basically filmed the whole time to capture the 'spontaneous reactions and comments'. Initially this was a real novelty and Sues face lit up when she got to film me collapsing due to altitude, or the tears after a bad swim...but we found doing pieces to camera in times like this really tough.... Yet it was all part of it!

On days off we got to visit the beautiful city of Cuzco and explore the



Left:
Helen and Emma at
the very source of the
Amazon

Left:
Filming

is at Home'

Super Challenge

ancient ruins of Machu Picchu. Along with a trip to 'Mirado Cruz del Condor' – the most popular viewing point for looking into the depths of the canyon (1200m deep here) Where we saw the worlds biggest birds – Condors, circulating.

Unbelievably tough

The canoeing was in two man inflatable canoes. Paul took the film crew down and our helpers – Pepe and Cachimere took our kit. Emma had never sat in a boat before and although I'm used to training everyday, I can honestly say that even I found the physical demands of paddling that craft for eight hours a day unbelievably tough! I think the early mornings (woken at 6am.) and having to put on frozen wetsuits each day contributed significantly though!



helen and Emma rafting

Less than fifty people in the world have ever canoed down the source of the Amazon. In places it was very shallow but the majority was fine and up to grade three. The scenery was just breath taking, amazing wildlife (you don't see too many herds of Llamas down the banks of Holme Pierrepont) and a fantastic river.

Other than the occasional capsizes, (one in which Sue lost her video camera – with the Amazon being the deepest canyon in the world, the chances of it ever being retrieved were slim... to say the least!) a near case of hypothermia and general fatigue, it ran pretty smoothly.

As with the rafting section, which followed, we camped on little beaches on the edge of the Amazon and carried all our equipment with us.

It was desperately cold at the source – minus 10 at night, but with natural Hot Springs close by it was the perfect solution to getting warmed up before breakfast. The adventure switched to whitewater rafting halfway through the trip, rafting down some of the most exiting and challenging rapids in the world (grade 5 plus), definitely the highlight for the whole team.

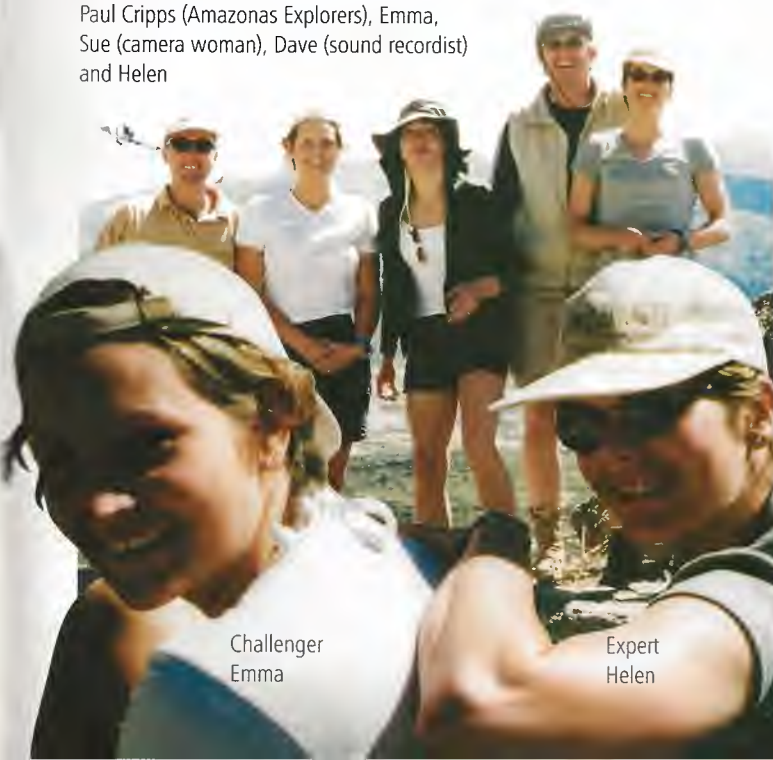
Each section was appropriately named, culminating in the 'last launch'. Safety was paramount and we had had a full support crew the whole time. (They also cooked all our meals.... which was nice!

To paddle the source of the world's mightiest river and to raft down such powerful rapids was just awesome. The whole experience was incredible. Both Emma and I and the camera crew, who took part in the challenge with us, it was an adventure we will never forget. ●

Helen Barnes

The team I to r:

Paul Cripps (Amazonas Explorers), Emma, Sue (camera woman), Dave (sound recordist) and Helen



Challenger
Emma

Expert
Helen

The Pleasures of Sea Kayaking



A group of young people with special needs from Oakwood High Youth Club, Park Lane, Salford spent a week Sea kayaking in Scotland

Over the last six years the Deputy Head of Oakwood High School and coordinator of the Youth Club, Michael Appleyard, and The Salford Watersports Centre, in particular Stuart Gibbon, have worked closely together to develop an outdoor pursuits programme for young people with special needs.

In our joint ventures we have open canoed extensively in the United Kingdom and ventured abroad to Denmark.

Early this year the Northwest Region of the B.C.U. along with Oakwood High Youth Club purchased eight sea kayaks. To promote sea kayaking to B.C.U. members (from my angle paddleability paddlers, M.A.) in the North



West Region.

Oakwood High Youth Club has a strong open canoeing tradition, as a development of its paddling and touring programme, we decided to go for a two-year sea-kayaking programme.

By July 1999 the first year was completed, successfully.

What do we mean by successfully?

We introduced a group of teenage boys, all with special needs, to the anxieties, fears and delights of sea kayaking. Granted, in safe and protected waters. But they all want more!

The group booked into Inverrary Youth Hostel for a week in June. Loch Fyne had been chosen as the Kayaking location. We chose to youth hostel as opposed to camping, because of the level of support the group needed and it was easier to

provide this based in a building. They still had to cook and wash. etc. The manager of the hostel was called Betty who had a lovely but firm way with the group members, which included Stuart. It also allowed us to have a good nights sleep. At my age I am now more inclined to sleep on a nice mattress than a hard floor under canvas.

The group was split into two: alternating between kayaking and cycling. Staff ratios were high. The aim of the first days kayaking was to paddle across the Loch and back. This allowed the young people to overcome their fears of paddling in an open area, a distance away from the shoreline. Coaxing, laughing and joking was an important feature of the first day.

Believe me the kayakers got the best deal. Those cycling came back with some beautiful mosquito bites. I was so grateful to be on the water!

On the following days we progressively moved towards the coastal entrance to the Loch. All the fears and anxieties the group had shown at the outset had disappeared.

Richard, who is hyperactive and takes the medication Ritalin daily, is begging to come again. He was so inspired by what he saw around him. The view down Loch Fyne, the affect of being one mile from either Loch side, of being able to explore small nesting rocks. To him it was like being on a TV nature programme. Richard is motivated to organise himself to come again, which is a big personal development.

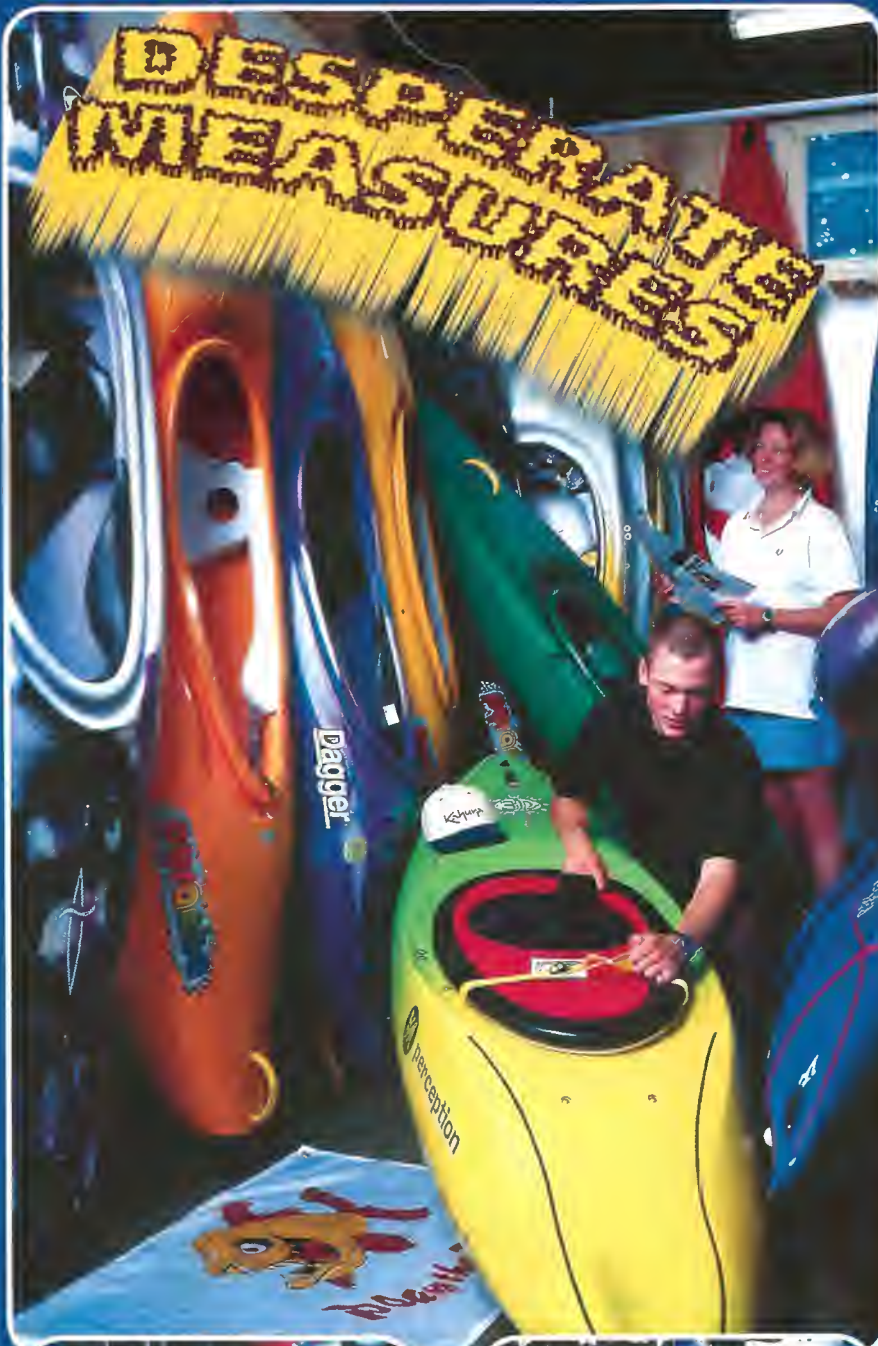
The trip had been organised to take away group pressures or stress. Individual paddlers could enjoy the impact of the environment without the distraction of negative peer behaviour. Remember our group comes from the City of Salford, an area associated with the typical problems of an inner city area.

On taking to the group members the word relaxing came into their vocabulary time and time again. All right we were lucky the weather was good in Scotland that week! But to paddle at their own pace, to look around and to know they will not be shrieked at, have to get out of somebody's way, not to hear police sirens and to be able to look at these wonderful views and explore.

It was this feeling of exploration that caught them! The programme had been carefully worked out. Yes! With a small group of six boys and four adults. But they have already signed up to go sea kayaking to Norway next year. The primary goal of the two-year project.

Sea kayaking is a wonderful experience for those individuals who like to tour and explore. ●

We want to thank THE PRINCES TRUST, and SOREEN, WARBURTONS for their sponsorship of the expedition.
Michael Appleyard



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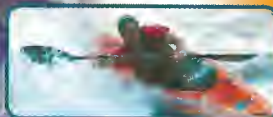
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